

IN THE WHIRLPOOL OF COMBAT



YURIY BORETZ



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— Staff Sergeant in the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA), was born in the Lemkivshchyna province of Ukraine. He belongs to that generation of Ukrainians which fought for the independence of Ukraine against Nazi Germany and Communist Russia during the Second World War. He is not a professional writer, but his detailed memoirs clearly illustrate the determination of his fellow-members of the UPA and the endurance and patriotism of the Ukrainian people during those difficult years. He shows that this great epoch in the history of the Ukrainian Liberation Struggle may only be compared to Bohdan Khmelnytsky's efforts to free Ukraine from foreign oppressors in the XVII century.

When in 1947 Yuriy Boretz, with a Raiding Group of the UPA, found himself in the West, he did not abandon his fight for an independent Ukraine. He now resides in Australia and takes an active part in the social, cultural and political activities of the Ukrainian community, and particularly in the Ukrainian Youth Association. To a great degree he has been responsible for the foundation of the Home for Ukrainian Youth in Sydney, which is the pride of the whole Ukrainian community in Australia.

The publication of this long-awaited book has been made possible by the financial help of the author himself, the Ukrainian Cultural Club in Sydney and Rev. Father Shevtsiv from Lidcomb. After reading this book, the Reader will fully understand not only the efforts of the Ukrainian Underground Movement in the struggle for an independent Ukraine during the Second World War, but will also have a clear picture of the subsequent developments in Ukraine as well as the present day stand against Russian communism and imperialism by the Subjugated Nations of Eastern Europe.

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A NOVEL OF OUR TIMES



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FOREWORD

It will be only fair both to the author and the readers of this book to state on my part that I have not had the opportunity for meeting or, for that matter, for corresponding with the author, and I have no personal financial stake in the book. All I am permitted by the space available to say here about the book is based entirely on its contents and my study of the subject.

In the relations between human beings on our planet it so happens often that reality becomes stranger than the most ingeniously thought out fiction. This book — though it is all about real life and events in it — is more fascinating than the strangest of fiction stories.

This book is about real people and true, in historical sense, events which took place in the '40s of this century and which the author had experienced, for he himself had been a participant in them. It is a factual story about the struggle for freedom by one of Europe's oldest nations, the Ukrainian. Therefore, it is a story about bloodshed, death of hundreds of people and extreme human suffering. It is also a story about the triumph of man's spirit and of his faith in the God-given right to universal human liberty.

There is a lot in store for the reader of this book; it is certain to broaden, if not to open a completely new view on the East European geography and history and on a long range of problems — some so obvious, others hidden from the view of the enlightened West for centuries.

The book is about love of the highest degree, love of God and one's native land and people, so strong that it numbs the physical and spiritual pain caused by extreme privations; it is about the courage, heroism and the boundless faith in and devotion to their ideals of the Ukrainian freedom-fighters, soldiers of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA), and about the brutality, cowardice and criminal acts of the actual and aspiring oppressors of the Ukrainian nation.

As a matter of fact, there is voluminous literature on the subject of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army and its activities by Russian and Polish Communist authors, most of whom participated in the worst imaginable atrocities against the Ukrainian people both inside the Soviet Union and on the Ukrainian territories which were, for various reasons, presented by the Russians to their puppet State, the so-called People's Republic of Poland.

As is their custom, although observing objectivity, so far as times and places of the UPA activities are concerned, these Communist authors try to shift the blame for their own forces' crime onto the Ukrainian liberation movement led by the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists under the late Stepan Bandera. But the fact is that neither they, nor anybody else will be able to wash off the criminals' hand the blood of countless Ukrainians — children, women and men, old and young — victims of the Russian and Polish Communists and chauvinists.

As stated elsewhere, this novel was first published in the Ukrainian language. It is generally accepted that in the process of translation every original work suffers something. The translators of this book managed to retain much of the spirit of the author's narrative in his native language, in particular when he relates to us the unquelled sense of humour of the personae dramatis, who display it even in the most difficult situations. And some of the situations described in the book present such a large scope for dramatization; many could serve as subject matter for a separate book. But the author describes them in a matter-of-fact way, as though telling us, "why, this was our daily life, there was nothing unusual about it." This simplification by the author does not take out of the story, it adds something undefined to it.

I also hope that, like myself, the readers will find Mr. R. Hluvko's drawings both entertaining and illuminating, and indeed helpful in extending the readers' imagination for the better understanding of the story.

By putting this book into the hands of the public at large the author not only contributes to a general understanding of at least some of the problems which existed and still exist in Eastern Europe, but also performs his duty to his comrades-in-arms who are still alive and those who lost their lives in defence of their mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers, of their towns and villages, of their heritage and honour, in fact of their Ukrainian nation, as a whole.

Only by reading this novel will the American, British or any other reader born free and living a free life appreciate the significance of the question posed by the main character in the story, Chumak, "Is a week in freedom not better than an age in slavery?" — and realise what is the Ukrainian cause.

I. Krushelnysky

P R O L O G U E

IN THE MAELSTROM OF UPA's STRUGGLE ON THE SYAN

Between the mountains and valleys of the Lemky region, many German troops moved westward along the mud-covered roads. They could be called troops only because they were still wearing military uniforms, for all military discipline seemed to have broken down. A former army, well knit together by Prussian discipline, had now turned into a mob of panic-struck fleeing people. Many military vehicles had been left behind along roads and ditches, some in good condition but without fuel. Here and there a truck would pull several others behind it for as long as the supply of fuel lasted, and then the troops would leave the truck and move on, on foot. The troops were of various formations, among them many high-ranking officers. This motley, intermingled with caravans of Ukrainian political emigrés, moved rapidly westwards. Several kilometres behind, in a similar crowd, regiments of the Russian Army followed them. All around was the noise of heavy artillery fire; planes flew low overhead and a strained atmosphere could be felt everywhere.

On a high hill overlooking the village of Volosate, detachments of still another army were camping. They also were tired. The uniforms of the various armies were ruined and their ranks were thinned considerably after a fierce two-year struggle against German regiments and the Red bands of Kovpak.* This was a battalion of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) under the command of Colonel Ren. The men came from various regions of Ukraine: Volyniya, Halychyna, Lemkivshchyna, the Dnipro River region, and Bukovyna. The campers were in high spirits, the soldiers sure of themselves, as if they were out for an evening stroll. Two squads from this battalion had been sent to the village to organize and store arms. On the road in the village they had stopped German and Hungarian troops, taking from them arms, ammunition, and other military equipment. The Germans and the Hun-

garians put up no sort of resistance. They were only wondering what kind of people these were, who at such a dangerous time, instead of fleeing to the West, collected arms for some reason, near the front itself.

At the headquarters of Col. Ren, plans were being laid for a break-through through the Bolshevik front line. Two days later this battalion was to fight for several hours and, in the large clearing near the forester's house, break and cross the Bolshevik front. Beyond the front, some detachments were ordered by the UPA Command to leave for Halychyna, while others with Col. Ren remained in Lemkivshchyna. The company of Commander Hromenko was assigned to the fourth district of the Peremyshl region.

The cruel Nazi oppression was coming to an end. To a large extent, the UPA was partly responsible for its fall. For two years its units had blown up bridges, paralyzed the enemy transportation network, destroyed its administration, and hindered the collection of supplies ('contingents'). Furthermore, the German Command had to withdraw part of its troops from the front in order to combat the UPA.

Now all Ukraine found herself under a new occupational power. Semibarbaric, dirty, and smelling of tar, the Russian regiments were moving west as though in the times of Andrey Bogolyubskiy* and under his command.

At Yalta, Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill, drinking Georgian wine, had divided the world. Regardless of the fact that millions had fought in this war, that it had been planned by thousands of experts, the division of Europe was accomplished by Stalin and Roosevelt with a forced consent by Churchill. The Georgian wine was doing its job and Roosevelt handed over one country after another to Stalin. There was no talk of freedom of nations or individuals, for arbitrariness reigned. The descendants of the Russian tsars set out immediately to establish control over the areas they had gained. Governments made up of renegades from the respective countries were prepared in advance in Moscow. Such a government was sent to Poland from Moscow under the leadership of Wanda Wasiliewska. For some reason Moscow allotted to Communist Poland a section of Ukrainian territories which included Lemkyivshchyna, Peremyshl, and Yaroslav regions, up to the former Curzon line.

During the first occupation of Halychyna by the Russians,

thousands of Ukrainian nationalists crossed into this area and after several years of organizational work the people of these territories became ready to fight for the Ukrainian Independent United State. Under direct pressure from Moscow, the new Communist government in Warsaw now set out to destroy these people and the UPA detachments in this region. In spite of the fact that this same Russia was responsible for the numerous divisions of Poland, had destroyed thousands of Polish officers at Katyn, drenched in blood the Polish insurrection in Warsaw, and in wagon loads transported Polish patriots to Siberia, the Poles still blindly followed Moscow's orders and annihilated the Ukrainian people *en masse* wherever they could.

The world was already rejoicing at the approaching end of the war, while the Ukrainian nation was intensifying its preparations for a new struggle. UPA detachments as well as hundreds of larger and smaller units of Self-defence Group Detachments (SKV) were being reorganized.



CHAPTER ONE

In March, 1945, even mother nature was confused. The snow which was falling for the third straight week without stopping covered all the Lemky region and the region beyond the Syan. Wet, large snowflakes continuously fell to the ground as if wanting to cover the barbarous filth of the Russo-Polish Communist system.

Wild Russian hordes and Polish Communist bands were completely destroying Ukrainian villages and towns. They rounded up the inhabitants of the village of Pavlivka in a church, closed the doors, surrounded it with machine-guns, and burned approximately 350 people alive.

About ten Ukrainian families were living at that time in the town of Dyniv. They were all killed. Yurko Prokop, his

wife and five children, with hands tied behind their backs, were drowned in a small pond.

Such massacres were taking place in every village beyond the Syan. Almost all Ukrainian priests, teachers, village mayors, and precentors were murdered. It was enough for the band to find a Ukrainian prayer book in the house, as an excuse for murdering the whole family.

In the village of Lubna, seventy victims were lying in the yards and along the road. The throats of four members of the Volovnyk family were cut with a sickle. A band numbering 120 cutthroats under the leadership of a *Volksdeutsche*, Bartz, who fought against the Ukrainian population on the side of the Germans in Volyniya, was raging through the village. The band acted under the slogan: "Revenge for Volyniya."

The Polish riff-raff, former estate servants, thieves, and beggars performed two tasks: the first was chauvinistic in character, the second was to change the social order with the help of Communist slogans. After murdering Ukrainian families, such bandits did not bother to bury their victims but left them strewn about the yard, and then plundered everything which fell into their hands.

At a time when shots mixed with the crying of children and the lamenting of women could be heard from the village of Lubna, four soldiers were camping in a small wood under a pine tree. They started a fire, shovelled away the snow, stamped it firmly with their military boots and, standing with their hands and backs to the fire, did three things at once: they warmed their frozen hands and back, dried their military uniforms, and watched their fore-field, ready to fire at any moment. There was no need to conceal the smoke, for the snow was falling without stopping, and the visibility range extended as far as the trunk of the pine. In any case, nothing besides the thickly falling snow could be seen. In this situation one had to depend more on hearing than on sight. From time to time a wet lump of snow would tear itself from the branches and fall upon the soldiers who were lost in thought.

If someone were to watch these men, he would not believe his eyes, for in one group there were two Bolshevik soldiers, one German, and one Pole in a white fur coat reaching to his knees. All four were well dressed, well shod, and well armed.

Each had an automatic pistol hanging across his shoulders, a pistol at the side, and several grenades in the belt.

It was impossible to tell by their speech what army they belonged to. They were very taciturn. Only after looking at the caps and belts and seeing the badges with Tridents could one recognize who they were.

They were, in fact, soldiers of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA). Perhaps this region did not see Ukrainian soldiers from the time of Svyatoslav* and, later, Khmelnytsky.** The region was very dangerous; other detachments were far beyond the Syan, and there were only four men here. Sova, a native of Yavirnyk Ruskyy, from Commandant Petya's squad of the Security Service (SB), was tall and handsome. Misha was a native of the Zhytomyr region, had lived in Western Ukraine since 1941, and was a member of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN). A bull's skin would not suffice for recording all his fights. The third was Zhurba, former commandant of Ukrainian police near Yaroslav. He was 190 cm. tall, born in Lubna, the very village where the terrible massacre was then taking place. The fourth was Chumak, also a native of Lubna, a former merchant in Dyniv, who was now a UPA soldier in the Company of Hromenko. He was a bit shorter, broad-shouldered, with curly hair. All four of them had often looked the devil in the teeth, but today they were standing silently under the pine tree, helpless to do anything to save their relatives and friends who were being mercilessly murdered by the bandits. Last night commander Hromenko and commandant Petya at an evening (roll-call) parade at the village of Volodzh asked for four volunteers for the action in Lubno. Then Chumak and Zhurba responded first, and Sova and Misha, who liked war, also raised hands. Commandant Petya issued an order which sounded like this: "Establish contact with members of OUN in the forests of Lubna, order them to collect and store arms in the area, assemble volunteers and lead them across the Syan to the rural district. Rush detachments (SKV), take part of the arms and ammunition along and catch the Polish

*) Svyatoslav the Conqueror (964-972), Great Prince of Kyiv Rus', ancient Ukraine.

**) Bohdan Khmelnytsky (1648-1657), Hetman (Chief) of Ukrainian Cossack State.

bandit Bartz. Read the sentence and punish him by death for his murdering of our population, and leave UPA literature, which calls on the Poles to fight together against the common enemy—the Bolsheviks—and urges them to stop annihilating the Ukrainian population.”

The volunteers checked their weapons, took a slice of black bread and a piece of pork (bacon) each, and in half an hour they were crossing the Syan River in a small boat. The river was then filled with water to the top of its banks.

On the western side of the Syan was the main road through which the Bolshevik detachments passed very often. Therefore it was necessary to be very careful. Putting the soldiers ashore on the other side, the boatman returned to the east bank with his boat, while the four volunteers crossed the highway and disappeared in the Varskyy forest. The passage to Lubna through Nizdrets, Vara, and Hlidna did not take more than five hours in normal times. But it took the four UPA men sixteen hours.

Drying his uniform and boots a bit, Chumak picked up from the ground a piece of bacon skin which he had just thrown away and began to rub his boots with it. With each shot or each female cry which could be heard from afar, he bit his upper lip so hard that it almost bled.

At last he broke the silence: “The hell with it! I can’t stand it any longer!”

Then, walking close to each other, they went down into the village, although this was tantamount to insanity.

The snow was slowly beginning to stop falling, as if wishing to open the sight of their native village before Chumak and Zhurba. The clouds were so black and hung so low that it seemed they could be reached with bare hands. Chumak was trampling snow up front and making a path, while his friends followed him in single file several steps apart, ready to fight, like tigers.

The village lay in the valley, and the houses were scattered on both sides of a stream. As of this day, approximately 500 Ukrainian families and about 400 Poles were living there. In the past, six Jewish families lived here as well, but they were murdered during the German occupation. Coming downhill, the soldiers were simply sliding down on their backs.

Before Chumak, his happy and cheerful years of youth

were passing in his thoughts as if on a movie screen. Here he had been hunting rabbits with the priest, Fr. O. Kapustynskyy. There he had gone ice-skating. There was the school, and over there an old church was barely visible. Not far from the church was his house, where his parents and family had lived. A heavy weight seemed to crush his chest again: "Are they still alive?" And Mariyka? She was so active in the cooperative society, in the amateur theatre group, at the Self-education Society, among the youth. What had happened to her? Where she lived the firing was heaviest at the moment.

Chumak's thoughts were interrupted by Misha who shouted, "Attention!"

The men were approaching a small stream above which a dozen or so houses were standing. In the bushes the people began to move around and then to flee. Chumak immediately noticed that these were their own people, who were hiding from the bands.

He shouted, "Don't be afraid. It's your own people!"

The people were dumbfounded. Who could it be? These men were not shooting, but speaking Ukrainian. The people were wide-eyed and frightened. A few more steps, and the UPA men joined the group.

Recognizing Chumak and Zhurba, the women and children began to cry with relief, while the men began to tell, all at once, about the terrible experience. They were sure now that they had been saved. It never occurred to them that the rescue force was made up of only four UPA soldiers.

"Don't talk so loud", warned Zhurba and then asked about the number of the band. Many people began to speak all at once. "There are bands from Dyniv, Horta, and Kazymyryvka, as well as many Poles from our own Lubna. All of them are directed and led by Bartz."

"Who has been murdered here?" asked Zhurba.

"There must have been many," they answered, "for firing could be heard all day long. Near us Pudlyk, Troyan, and Shevchuk have been killed."

In the meantime Misha and Sova checked a few houses. Misha sat down on a stool; Sova called the people from the stream to the house. Wet children, wrapped in rags, were shivering with cold. The owner of the house was very quiet.

"Husband, make the fire," she said. "Look how wet and cold they all are."

In a few moments a large black loaf of bread appeared on the oaken table, as well as several onions, salt, and several pitchers of milk. This was the last milk in the homestead, for the bandits had just taken away the last cow.

Chumak drank a glass of milk, standing at the window and thinking to himself, "What should we do now? The people are counting on us. They are almost sure that we will save them, but there are only four of us. They are dying because they are Ukrainians and because they are unarmed. And we, on the other hand, are experienced insurgents and armed."

Just then a young boy named Andriy Pudlyk brought a rifle to the house which he found somewhere in the barn. Sova checked to see if it was loaded. This gave Chumak an idea: "There are many weapons in the village. Maybe we should organize the boys. But how can we contact them?"

In the village the firing was now less frequent. Most of the shots came from the upper part of the village where Chumak's parents were living.

Suddenly a neighbour, Shchepko, a participant of the Liberation struggle in 1918, entered the house. Crossing the room he opened the flaps of a rather wornout fur coat and showed Chumak an Austrian pistol.

"How many bullets?" asked Chumak.

"Eighteen. What are we going to do next?" asked Shchepko.

Chumak liked this question. "What are we going to do" meant the raising of a group able to fight to live.

In a few minutes they went through the village with weapons in their hands. The four UPA men marched very cautiously and slowly, taking up the whole street, Shchepko with a *Mauser* in his hand, and Andriy with the rifle across his shoulders. Having four insurgents in front, about whom he had heard so much but was seeing now for the first time, Shchepko could not understand why they were moving so slowly and holding their automatics in their hands. Suddenly a sled pulled by a pony came up from behind. It was carrying the corpses of three murdered Ukrainians to the cemetery.

The Poles recognized Chumak and Zhurba, turned pale and, perhaps for the first time in their lives, began to speak in Ukrainian.

"I see that there are still some honest Poles left," said Chumak, while a plan was forming in his mind. "How far behind us are the two hundred Banderites? (Banderivtsi) Have you seen them?"

"I don't know," said one Pole.

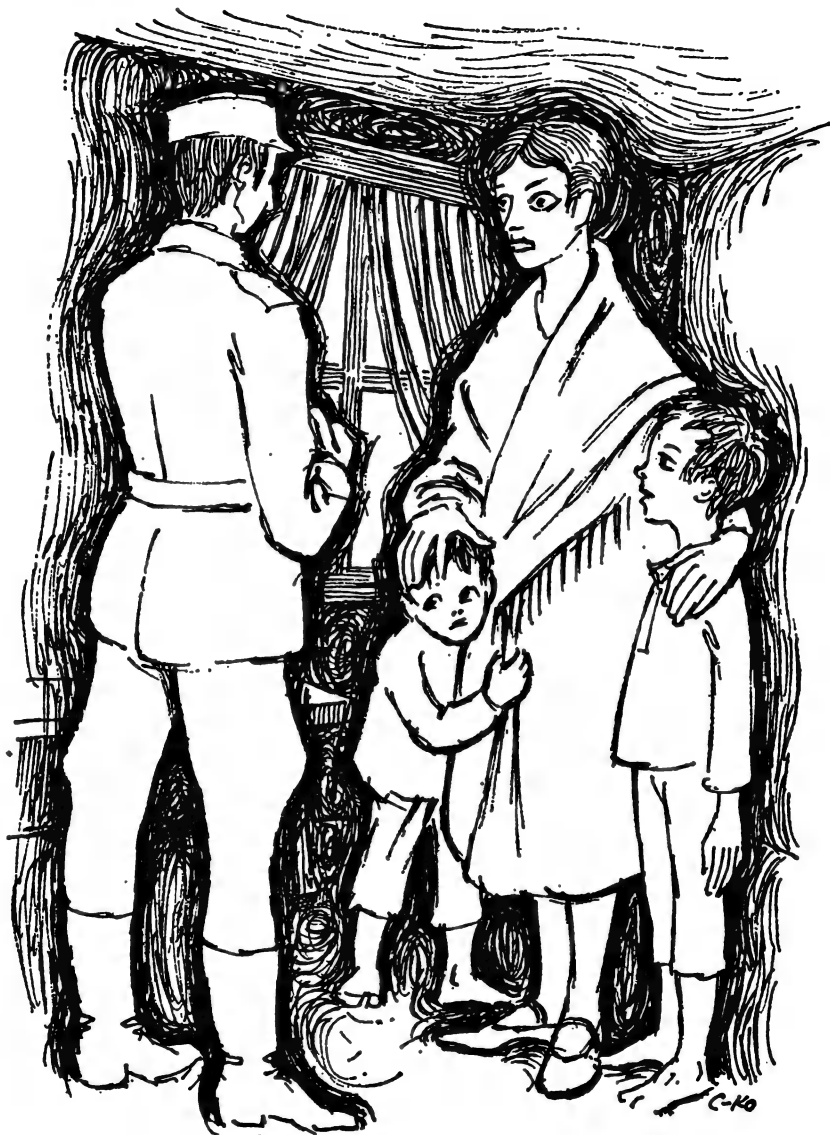
Chumak turned to the boys, "We'll have to wait for our own men to join us. And you, fellow, take these victims to the cemetery and don't be afraid. We will shoot only bandits."

The man hit the horse and left rather fast, as if the dead men were in a hurry.

Chumak was considering what effect his story about two hundred Banderivtsi would have. All of Eastern Europe knew about the Banderivtsi by then. The Red Army made great 'publicity' for them. Going west they inquired after the Banderivtsi first, and then after the Germans. Chumak was sure of one thing: the Polish bands were going to hear the news very shortly. They did not have to wait long for confirmation. Marching into the centre of the village, the insurgents saw cattle running loose and sacks filled with loot. To the left, six bandits were fleeing into the forest, falling in the snow. Zhurba sent a series of shots from his automatic to frighten them even more.

A few more rapid shots from the automatics of the insurgents almost stopped the shooting in the upper end of the village. The portion of the village through which the insurgents were progressing was settled almost completely by Ukrainians. Nevertheless, the inhabitants could not be seen; only here and there a human face would show itself in some window from time to time and then disappear again, seeing armed men in the road. From some of the houses the laments of women and the crying of children could be heard, a sign that in that house a family had lost a father or some other member of the family. It was getting dark when the insurgents reached the centre of the village. Now they felt more sure of themselves, perhaps because night is the mother of the guerrillas, and also because the bandits were fleeing in panic. Even the impatient Andriyko, with his rifle, found himself in front of the insurgents several times only to be reminded by a distant shot that his place was in the back.

Because of the white snow, one could see as clearly as by day. The clouds disappeared, allowing the moon and the



stars to view the result of the day's massacre. Then they were again hidden by clouds.

One more bend in the road which went along the stream itself, and Chumak's house could be seen. The house was panelled with boards, with a tin-plate roof; the barns and stables had thatched roofs, and there was a nice orchard. There was no light inside the house. A few more quickened paces and the insurgents stopped along the road, while Chumak entered the yard. He saw that the stable doors were swung open, the stable was empty, the doors to the house were ajar, and everything that had not been looted was turned upside down. Where were his parents, his family? He ran around the house, then joined his own men on the road.

He said to Andriyko as to an old UPA hand:

"Take Zhurba and Sova to Pashkivskyy by the stream. I have to talk to Onufriy Troyan. If he is still alive, tell him to bring as many of our boys as possible."

Andriyko understood Chumak right away and even allowed himself to change the order. He turned to Shchepko: "You lead them, and I'll run ahead." Without waiting for approval he began to run and disappeared among the houses without using the road, a smart move on his part.

Chumak and Misha remained on the road. Misha hung his automatic across his chest and rolled a cigarette, while Chumak looked at his empty, looted house. A fat book could have been written about his happy life with his parents, as a little boy and as a lad of 18. Chumak read this unwritten book for the second time in several seconds. In the meantime Misha already had lit two cigarettes and stuck one of them in Chumak's mouth.

It was the irony of fate that Bartz, the chieftain of the Polish battalions of Communist riffraff, lived on the other side of the river, opposite Chumak's house. He had come to Lubna around 1931 as an administrator of the manorial estate. Here he married Fuchs's daughter and in the beginning of 1939 moved to Volhynia, from where he returned in 1943 without anything and again began to live in that same house, beside which Chumak and Misha were now discussing the plan for Bartz's capture.

"You will go around the house and wait under the pear tree, while I'll go to the front door," said Chumak.

Misha crossed the small footbridge to the other side and began to circle the house, while Chumak went slowly to the door. This time he hung his automatic across his shoulder and held a pistol in his hand. After a brief knock a woman opened the door. Even though her husband was the master of life and death in this region, she was now very frightened. "This means that the news about the Banderivtsi has reached here," thought Chumak. He looked into one room, then into another, and into the pantry. Then, taking a lamp, he climbed to the attic, although he was sure that Bartz would not be there.

In the attic he found some of the merchandise which he had brought some time ago from his shop in Dyniv to his parents for safekeeping. This merchandise had been looted by the band several months ago.

"Where is your husband?" asked Chumak.

To his surprise, the woman began to speak in rather good Ukrainian. Most probably she had learned it in Volhynia.

"He is not here," the woman's lips trembled. "You know that we have always been on good terms with your family," she said, having her parents in mind. "Today many Ukrainians have been hiding in their house," she continued.

"And where are my parents?" asked Chumak.

"In your aunt's house," answered the woman.

"And does your husband know about it?"

"No."

"And where is he?"

The woman shrugged her shoulders helplessly and began crying. A small boy, seeing this, began to cry too. The older boy's eyes showed bewilderment.

"Do you know that there are many Banderivtsi in the village?" asked Chumak.

"Yes," she said.

"And who told you this?"

"Wojtek told me."

"And how many?"

"About a thousand," she said, drying her tears.

Chumak was glad. His invention worked.

"Tell your husband that he will be punished by death if another Ukrainian family should die. He will hang from a tree."

Chumak checked the closets, took the AK (Home Army)

and the BKh Communist (Peasant Battalion) literature, as well as three cases of ammunition for the automatics, which he found among the papers.

Misha caught up with Chumak on the footbridge and the latter recalled his conversation with Bartz's wife.

Misha shook his head, saying, "Imagine a similar incident on the other side. If the Poles were in our place and a Ukrainian woman in hers, then they would certainly have shot her and the boys."

"I am completely sure of this," answered angry Chumak.



CHAPTER TWO

In Pashkovskyy's house by the stream about twenty people had gathered. Some were just coming, others were leaving and disappearing among the houses, searching for someone.

Chumak and Misha entered the house. In a rather spacious room the peasants were swarming around Sova and Zhurba for the first time. They were seeing the insurgents about whom they had heard and read so much in underground literature.

Chumak was approached by Onufriy Troyan, his very good friend. This was a tall, heavily built man, one of the leading members of OUN in this region. His pseudonym was "Kamin'" (Stone). Both friends greeted each other warmly. Kamin' asked Chumak to another room, the so-called *van'kyr* (bed-room or nursery). This room had a wooden floor, the beds were

standing by the walls, in the centre was a table with chairs, and pictures were hanging on the walls.

Chumak took off his Mazepa-cap, put the literature and the ammunition on the table, and took off a white fur coat of some Gestapo man.

Kamin' was pacing the room and reproaching himself:

"How could we have permitted such a massacre today? We have thirty OUN members; we have arms and our members know how to use them, for they have undergone military training."

Chumak interrupted this recrimination. He opened the door leading to the kitchen and asked Misha if sentries had been posted.

The answer was in the affirmative:

Four of Kamin's boys were already standing guard, one of them with a Degtyarov machine-gun. Chumak called Misha, Zhurba, Sova, and Shchepko to the bedroom. The hostess brought warm milk, bread, butter, and cheese. Chumak was in a hurry. For some reason he had great respect for Shchepko.

"Where is Sova?"

"Oh, Sova is flirting in the corner with some girl," somebody replied.

At that very moment a girl wearing boots and wrapped in a black shawl entered the room. She was followed by Sova, a head taller than she.

"Chumak, have you really traded a girl for tobacco and a pipe?" asked Sova jokingly. He found out in the other room that Mariyka was Chumak's fiancée.

The joke was very inappropriate at that moment. Of course, Sova did not know about a terrible event in her life, that on this very day Mariyka's whole family — father, mother, and sister Hanusya — had been murdered by the Bartz bandits who cut their throats with a sickle.

Usually cheerful and tall, Mariyka could hardly be recognized now, for she had lost so much weight. Chumak approached her. She threw herself in his arms, pressed herself against him, and wanted to say something, but she couldn't. Her tears rolled down his cheeks. She did not cry out loud, only sobbed heavily. Chumak tried to cheer her up, but to no avail. All that she had gone through this day was too much for her.

Then Chumak asked Andriyko to take her to some safe place.

"Important matters await us. Come back immediately!"

Mariyka did not say even one word, while leaving with Andriyko. Chumak bit the right side of his lower lip. This was their last encounter.

The meeting in the room lasted for over an hour. All sorts of propositions were made. But Chumak just sat on the bed and smoked one cigarette after another without hearing, it seemed, what was being discussed.

Suddenly he felt upon him the eyes of the woman who was clearing the table, and who had known him since childhood. She remembered most of all how he used to come from the town of Dyniv and on Sundays, with books under his arm, used to take his father's horses to graze near her house. She remembered also later years, when she used to go shopping in town. Among numerous Jewish shops there was one with the sign in Ukrainian: "Textile shop." Here she often used to buy several meters of linen or other fabrics for herself and her child. How proud she was then that it was a Ukrainian shop, belonging to Chumak, her neighbor at that. She was wiping her tears off with her apron. It was hard to tell whether she was feeling sorry for him, or whether she was still proud of him.

It was late in the night when Kamin asked Chumak, "And what do you think?"

At that time someone knocked at the door and, without waiting for a reply, Andriyko opened it and entered the room with Kos.

Kos started to speak immediately. "Comrades, we're in trouble! Today during the massacre I ran to Dyniv. There the eighth reserve regiment of the Red Army is stationed. I spoke with a major. He cannot help us but said that Polish government will be established here and advised us all to flee to Syanik and then to go East."

Kamin spoke up again. "What do you think, Chumak?"

Chumak got up energetically and began to speak. "Comrades, we came here with a special assignment. Under these conditions, however, we must adapt ourselves to circumstances. When the Polish bands and fighting cells find out that there are no UPA companies here they will continue to massacre our population." "He made a brief pause, then

continued." Therefore, I'm ordering, Kamin, that our rallying point is on the Kryvulya. Send the people there, but only those who could serve in the District Self-Defence and the UPA units. Take enough food for one day, but as many weapons and ammunition as possible. Try to establish contact with the Youth Branch of the OUN, and circulate the order about going to the East as fast as possible, for otherwise the bands will butcher the whole village, as they have done in Pavlokoma."

Kamin left the room and after several minutes of instruction the people dispersed through the village.

On the following day the warm March sun came out and the waist-deep snow began to melt. In the forest of Kryvulya, breaking the rules of conspiracy a bit, a small fire was lit and near it three members of UPA were drying their uniforms, and the fourth was standing sentry at the forest's edge. They changed every two hours.

From time to time several people loaded with arms, ammunition, and other military hardware joined them. Carts dragged by cattle, horses, or even by people themselves passed through the village.

The several-thousand-year indigenous population was leaving its villages, many of them for the first time in their lives. Where were they going? They didn't know. Many of them left behind their murdered relatives unburied. When the caravan was leaving the village, several hundred Red Army troops arrived and asked not for the bloodthirsty Polish bands which murdered people, but for the Banderivtsi. At the same time another group was getting ready to leave Kryvulya forest. It was made up of thirty people, including three girls.

"The load is too heavy," said Sova to Chumak, looking at twenty-six loaded people. "The area is difficult too."

"Never mind. The boys are strong," Chumak replied, smiling.

They said prayers together, checked weapons, and started on the road. The snow was now a great handicap. Every few steps the front man stepped aside, and the one following him became first. Thus by taking turns they cleared a path for themselves.

When it became completely light outside all, extremely tired, were standing on top of a hill in the Varsky forest.

Before them stretched the broad Syan River filled with water to the top of its banks, and beyond it the village of Volodzh, where Hromenko's company was stationed. Before the river was the main Peremyshl-Syanik highway, which was often used by Bolshevik troops. A meeting with them was not welcome. When a light signal was given from Volodzh, an UPA squad began running in the direction of the Syan, while two boats started across the river.

"Friends," said Chumak, "this is a very dangerous moment. The major highway is passing right by the river. In the event of a Bolshevik attack, before we are going to get on the boats, we have to return to the forest. Lest they find us in the boats, in which it would take about ten minutes to cross, we must lie on the bottom.

"I don't know if there is going to be room for everyone. Thirteen go to the boat on the left and thirteen on the right. In the meantime four of us are going to stand guard. Is everything clear?"

Chumak was asking these questions because he realized that he was talking to civilians for whom — until yesterday — revolution was only romantics.

Zhurba and Misha were already manning outposts on both sides of the road. They needed no coaching, for they knew the drill perfectly.

The boats reached the bank.

"On the double," ordered Chumak, and in several minutes the people filled the boats. A short whistle brought Zhurba and Misha back from the outposts. They leaped into the boat and the oarsmen began to row at full speed, while the passengers helped to row with their hands. The water almost reached the top of the boats.

Can one imagine a worse field of defence than the middle of a river, thought Chumak, who also began to paddle with his hands.

"We are in Ukraine already," said Misha, placing his foot on the other bank of the river.



CHAPTER THREE

In a pretty brick house, covered by tin-plate, the Company Commander Hromenko and his staff were quartering. Chumak crossed the threshold, stood to attention, and began to report. The Captain was combing his thick, curly hair with his left hand, for he could not lift his right hand above his chin. His arm had been severely wounded in battles in Volhynia. Turning away from a small mirror which was hanging beneath a picture, wearing an elegant green uniform, he looked handsome, smiling a bit, but nevertheless serious. He had no officer's emblems, only the pistol on the belt and a mapholder revealed that he was an officer. His boots were good and polished, on the table lay a light automatic. After hearing the report he said "Thank you," and offered cigarettes to Chumak. Then he turned to the quartermaster who was

sitting at the table and writing resolutely, and asked him to take care of the people from across the Syan.

For some UPA detachments which were operating in the Carpathians during the German occupation, the passage of the Bolshevik front came without a fight. Other detachments, such as Ren's battalion and the companies of Bayda and Chornyy, had to engage in heavy fighting with the Bolshevik regiments which advanced, as they all were saying then, toward Berlin.

On the new map of East Europe a small line showed up which indicated the Curzon line. That was the new frontier between the Soviet Union and "People's" Poland. This frontier, however, was only on the map, for all these regions were under the control of the UPA.

Neither the Poles nor the Russians could protect this frontier. For this they would need many divisions of troops. In many of the villages there were billeted UPA companies. Besides the UPA troops, there were also other detachments, such as the district self-defence detachments (SKV), the Field Gendarmery (PZh), Security Service (SB), the network, and the administrative bodies. The people had not paid any taxes to the invaders since 1944, as the result of which the farms were a bit better off in the period of 1945-46.

The situation was worse in the western regions where there were mixed Ukrainian and Polish villages. The chauvinistic Polish bands in their arbitrariness had gone far beyond the old-time Tatar barbarity and it sufficed to say one word in Ukrainian on Polish-occupied territory to get shot. These bands raided Ukrainian villages and not a day went by without a bandit attack somewhere in the area.

A *de facto* boundary at that time for the Bolshevik and the Polish bands from Yaroslav, Peremyshl, Dyniv, and as far as Syanik, was the Syan River. This beautiful river cut a bed for itself by sheer force, often struggling with this or that cliff. Losing the struggle, it immediately turned left or right again. Every few kilometres it had its fords, but even at the fords it did not keep its waters lower than waist deep. Each springtime it had the most trouble with its waters.

Ukrainian names of villages beyond the Syan were proof that the Ukrainian state had extended this far in the past, although the Polish language was completely dominant in some of them. Larger and smaller towns with their stone

churches and tombstones in the cemeteries defended themselves better. In spite of the fact that some churches had been converted into Polish churches here and there, their origin could be easily discerned at a distance of several kilometres. This part of Ukraine, Zasyannya and Lemkivshchyna, with its picturesque landscape at the foot of the Carpathian Mountains, with its green forests, rapid streams which flowed into the Syan River, and neat villages, was one of the most beautiful parts of the world.

In the region extending from Peremyshl to Syanik, an UPA battalion under the command of Colonel Konyk was stationed for several years. This battalion at that time was made up of five companies in the following order: the companies of Hromenko, Burlaka, Krylach, Lastivka, and Yar.

The village of Volodzh was surrounded by the Syan in a semicircle. The land bordering on the river was flat, with about one hundred homesteads. These were large, attractive brick-built houses with a church, a school, and a library. The people were nationality conscious and hospitable. On the other side of the Syan, on a somewhat elevated terrain there was a large forest of several hundred acres, and in the middle of this forest, on a plain, lay a tiny settlement known as Volya Volodzka. At a later date this settlement received another name — from the enemy — the “Banderite Berlin.” For tactical reasons, so as not to bring the shelling too close to the village, Commander Hromenko ordered the company to shift to Volya Volodzka.

At night the company marched over thawing snow to the new location. In front went a patrol, behind that a contact-officer, then the company commander and his retinue. Behind them rode the commander's aide-de-camp and finally the platoons marched in single file. Finding quarters in this settlement, where quartermaster Sokolenko planned to build his “dacha” after the war, the troops received an unexpected rest. Some soldiers already had two years of UPA service behind them. At a time when the soldiers enjoyed the warm rays of spring sun, and the only obstacle was a turn at guard duty, all sorts of workshops operated at full speed, in particular the shoemaker and tailor shops.

There was no rest, however, at the headquarters of Commander Hromenko and his staff. Here various people came daily, some ordinary messengers with special deliveries,

others, as was then said, came from "above." These people came from various parts of West Ukraine: Kolomyia, Lviv, Hrubeshiv, Krynytsya, and the Trykutnyk regions. These conferences or meetings often lasted for two or three days.

"With the exception of larger cities, whole areas of West Ukraine are in our hands," said Orlan, a member of the Ukrainian Supreme Liberation Council (UHVR) once. He had just left the conference room and went over to his comrades who gathered under a pear tree. Jokingly he told them about the progress and hardships of other UPA detachments. Twice a week the officer on duty rounded up the company for political education classes. For several minutes the instructor informed the company on world affairs and then spoke about educational topics, which in most cases began with the words and prophecies of T. Shevchenko. He always paused at Mikhnovskyy and Petlyura; on another occasion he continued with Bilas, Danylyshyn, the Warsaw and Lviv trials, and the Act of June 30th in Lviv.

At that time Hromenko's company numbered about two hundred and twenty men. Its staff was composed as follows: Captain Hromenko, Lieutenant Lahidnyy, Quartermaster Sokolenko, the Company Doctor Nimets, Company Dentist Huzar, Political Instructor Zoryan, Company Master, Adjutant Loza. At that time the company had four platoons with four squads each. At a later date the company had five platoons. Each platoon was composed of a platoon Commander, Deputy, an orderly and a Political Instructor. Each squad had a squad leader, his deputy, cook, one machine-gunner, two ammunition carriers, and six riflemen. The squad's equipment consisted of one machine-gun, one or two machine pistols, four automatic rifles, and seven rifles. Personnel and equipment were almost the same in each company, except for the fact that some platoons were additionally equipped with grenade throwers. Various makes of equipment were to be found. One platoon had Polish-made arms, another Soviet-made, and the rest mixed.

The two-week rest period ended. At evening prayers at sunset the company stood to attention. Duty Officer Chayka reported to Commander Hromenko. After the command "at ease," the men's favorite captain, always cheerful, always smiling, looked more serious that day.

"Comrades!" began the C.O., "The situation looks grim. The

war is nearing its end, but we have to face perhaps the hardest years of struggle. Any of you wishing a discharge from the Company can receive it today. Those wishing such a discharge please step forward."

Here he fell silent for a moment. Viewing the company, standing three abreast, he saw no volunteers. Then he continued.

"In the opinion of our leadership a general revolution is impossible at this time. The Bolsheviks have intoxicated the British and the American governments with their socialist propaganda and receive from them billions in aid. Were it not for this assistance, and had the West supported the subjugated peoples morally, the present situation would look different indeed. Our position is very simple. The enemy wants our land, and we want to show him how we are going to defend it. In order to be well prepared for this struggle, the Leadership has worked out a far-reaching programme, which we are going to implement beginning tomorrow. We need construction workers to build many underground bunkers for storage of food and ammunition. At the same time, as many hiding-places should be built as possible, so that in the event of discovery by the enemy, not too many weapons would be lost. The second thing is training and more training of troops, with most emphasis on guerrilla tactics. Also better training of SKV detachments, and military training of the civilian population. We are going to exercise utmost secrecy; in other words, we will learn to keep our mouths shut. Several men from our company are going to be sent to officers-training school."

Finishing his address the Commander turned to the duty officer and said, "Order the prayer!"

"Prayer!" ordered the officer and a loud "Our Father," louder than any so far, was said together by over two hundred comrades.

At dismissal the officer said, "Tomorrow morning prayer at five o'clock."

In the barn, the straw placed by the men on the floor crackled while the arms and ammunition were clanging. The men were going to sleep. At the same time each one was saying his prayers, this time quietly, all by himself.

It became very late. Only loud snoring of the men and the croaking of frogs were heard. Chumak, however, could not

sleep. Through the wide-open doors of the barn he could see the sky with millions of bright stars and, through sparsely set planks, the penetrating light of the moon. In the stream the spring waters were roaring and from the nearby forest one could smell the resin.

Lying on his back, Chumak loosened the buckle, unfastened his coat, examined his automatic and, putting his hands behind his head, tried to fall asleep. But the oncoming thoughts would not let him. There were so many of them that it was almost painful. "Why won't there be a revolution?" This question bothered him all the time.

Lemkivshchyna alone could give many thousands of trained and armed insurgents. When at the present time in the Zakerzonnya (Trans-Curzon) region there are only several thousand of us, armed men, and the enemy would not dare to take control of Lemkivshchyna; then what is the reason? further thought Chumak.

Quite recently, before the Second World War, indifferent Lemkivshchyna and Posyannya were completely passive. Thanks to the very, very great activity of the raiding units of the OUN, the Lemkivshchyna of today is writing a beautiful history of the defence of its territories.

At present the Russian regiments have gone West, and smaller units are bypassing our territory by tens of kilometres. And what is the policy of the West? Is it possible, that in case of a revolution, the Allies will help the Bolsheviks? We have the subjugated peoples on our side.

What are the prospects for our struggle in the event that the Russian regiments will finish Hitler's Germany and will turn all their power against us? Will we hold out longer than two weeks? All these confusing thoughts now raced through the mind of Chumak. Are we destined to be revolutionaries for the rest of our lives? It's such a beautiful spring, but where are family, girls, former friends, years of happiness?

Only at dawn did Chumak fall into deep sleep.



CHAPTER FOUR

It was just getting grey outside when the guards began to wake the insurgents. There was no need to dress, for all slept fully dressed. Short exercise, washing, shaving, polishing of boots, changing of foot clothes, prayer, and then breakfast, which was prepared by the squad cooks.

Now quartermaster Sokolenko had most of the work with supply planning. Here there was not so much as a nail, let alone utensils or building materials. After several days of good organization the work was in full swing. In several months' time the tremendous work of provisioning the UPA detachments and the whole underground movement for a longer period of time was performed.

Similar work was done by each region of the Underground in Ukraine. One squad of each platoon built hiding-places, and the remaining squads underwent daily military training.

Misha's squad began to build hide-outs near the village of Burivnytsi in a grove adjoining a large forest. Here two small streams joined and the water was constantly roaring. Between those two streams rose a relatively high hill covered by tall pines and hazel.

The spot for the hide-out was very well chosen, if one took its purposes into consideration. Each such hiding place was to serve many purposes: a storage place for arms, food, and medicine; a hospital; headquarters for the Regional Command of the OUN and its administration, which were tied to their region at all times; and as a retreat for Security Service men and contacts men.

Taking into consideration all possibilities and the purposes of the hiding place, including the seasons, especially the hard winter, Misha and his insurgents nevertheless decided to build it between these two streams. There were no paths here which could be a threat to secrecy during the construction. By wading in the stream one could reach the hiding place without leaving any traces behind. In case of enemy detection of the hide-out, at least a part could break through to one of the two streams and reach the woods.

Each day after posting scouts, persistent work began. When the look-out noticed somebody in the forest, they immediately called on their comrades to stop work, so as not to betray the location of the hiding place. This pertained to other insurgents as well, so that in case of capture, under tortures they would not betray the place. After digging out the earth and rocks in the natural recess of the hill, the hide-out was six metres long, four metres wide and two metres high. Walls and floor were laid in wood. Subterranean water was drained by hidden pipes under the floor. There were more problems with the roof. Here one had to use heavy logs, to isolate it from water, and to cover it with rocks and dirt over one metre thick. The work was unusually difficult. At times, a whole day was needed to break up and to cart away in a wheelbarrow one cubic metre of rock.

Here no sense of humour was lacking. Rifleman Pavuk complained jokingly that this work was good enough for civilians but not for his "delicate" hands. To this rifleman Kohut replied, "Don't be afraid; you will milk cows better after the war." Pavuk fought back with "You bum; somebody has to be mayor."

"Mr. Mayor, the wheelbarrow is waiting." Again replied the short and comically slow Kohut to Pavuk.

The construction was coming to an end. The most important thing, camouflaging, was still to be done. It was necessary to disguise the place naturally, to make it look as if a human foot had never been here. All the branches which were covered by dirt during the excavation were washed and it was checked to see if any broken trees remained, or any cigarette butts or some other rubbish. The covering of the surface and camouflaging lasted several days.

Misha's squad built two more caches, one in the Delyahivskyy wood, very similar to the first, and another one in Hrushivskyy wood, according to completely different specifications. It was simple, four metres by four metres, and three metres deep, in which grain was stored. This hidden warehouse was covered with a relatively thick layer of straw on all sides. Ventilation and draining of subterranean water came out beneath the floor. This method of storage proved successful for two years, with only a few centimetres of grain on both sides being spoilt.

At the end, the plans of the caches, marked with secret markings, were handed over to the company's administrative office. Some squads, after finishing their construction work, returned to the company. Then others began to build. After two days of rest, Misha's squad joined its platoon, which was headed by platoon commander Zaliznyak.

Here military exercises and training began. The training lasted for seven hours daily, with half a day of theory and half a day of practice. Here often one could hear the old fighters, who had behind them several years of hardening and a score or two of battles, complain about the newcomers who had just been transferred from the SKV detachments (Samooborannyy Kushchovyy Viddil, local self-defence unit). Even though they were the best in their respective SKV detachments, and for this reason were selected and sent to UPA detachments, they could hardly equal the old fighters.

Often during such exercises it was possible to come across another platoon in an attack, or to ambush the SKV men. Such units were found in every village. They were organized on the pattern of UPA detachments. The smallest cell of SKV in one village was a squad, and larger villages had as many as two platoons. Administratively, they were under the

command of the OUN network; tactically, under the UPA command of a given region their task was to defend the civil population against the Polish Communist gangs, which task they carried out very well so that it was only occasionally necessary to send them an UPA squad or platoon as reinforcements.

Some SKV units performed their duties only at night, for during the day they had to work on the land, while others were in regular military service. Their military training was given by the instructors from the UPA detachments. At times general training was conducted twice a week. Also, all able-bodied men between the ages of 18 and 50 had undergone military training, conducted by the UPA instructors. From time to time beloved commander Hromenko himself came and directed the exercises of the whole company. At these times the training went much better, all were more active and more obedient. After practical training, the commander took the company to the clearing and instructed it in topography. Following these daily war games the company marched to the village for quartering, choosing a different village almost every day.

Entire regions of Zakerzonnya were under the control of the UPA. For tens of kilometres around there were no enemy troops. This was the calm before a big storm.



CHAPTER FIVE

Three abreast, the company marched to the village. In front was the staff on horseback. The company physician, Dr. Shuvar, who also directed the company's choir, gave the key note to the first three men of commander Chayka's platoon. They began the insurgents' song. The insurgents' marching song, which was echoed by two hundred healthy lungs. At first they marched along a forest road, and then the company entered the field in the direction of Yavirnyk Rus'kyy and Rybne. This part of the terrain was rather hilly. The marching insurgents saw the silver-ribboned Syan on the left, and along the river bank were villages with houses painted white. Some roofs were covered with straw, others with tin-plate.

The company's mood was very cheerful, and marked time to

the rhythm of their own song. Even the horses, as if dancing ballet-fashion, marched to the rhythm of the song. Only the conductor, Dr. Shuvar, failed to keep time, going from platoon to platoon and waving his hand to direct the singing. The song was coming out better all the time. It echoed over the hills and villages, flying over the Syan.

How strange.

World War II was ended. The whole world was celebrating, and the Ukrainian people had to continue their struggle with even more determination. The Russian regiments, after finishing off Hitler's Germany, were all going to be turned against our movement. Furthermore, it was necessary to fight against American tanks, jeeps, and weapons, which Russia was getting free by the millions.

How wonderful it was to march with this company, part of that heroic army which waged a fierce struggle for Ukraine's freedom and independence, thought Chumak. Is a week in freedom not better than an age in slavery? Only recently, one Polish policeman was enough to control several villages here, but today the enemy regiments were avoiding these areas out of fear.

The company was nearing the village. The road was filled with people who were called outdoors by cheerful songs, which brought some women to tears. The insurgents were met by girls, many of whom were engaged to UPA men, but did not kiss publicly. They expressed their feelings by holding hands and by the happiness in their eyes.

The staff was quartered in the home of the Bak family, very intelligent and worthy Ukrainians whose children had all received higher education. One son, Teofil, a former friend of Chumak, an old revolutionary, was now abroad somewhere. It would be nice to know if he were doing good work there. The youngest daughter, always very gay and lively, was talking now to commander Zaliznyak; Chumak knew they were very much in love. He sighed and thought about his Mariyka . . . Mrs. Bak was very charming, a good housekeeper and very hospitable.

The village was very merry. Here and there one could hear singing, this time mingled with female voices.

Chumak shook his head. A future historian would find it very hard to determine the number of those involved in the insurgent movement. In the Lemkivshchyna Region alone,

the entire Ukrainian population participated in the struggle. The OUN, having behind it years of fighting experience, now had the complete confidence of the Ukrainian people. The OUN network extended to places where only a few Ukrainians lived, without forgetting the Ukrainian settlers in Poland, Slovakia, and Bohemia. On the territories where the OUN and UPA were active, the administrative activity was also very active and prompt. Various former political parties which existed in Halychyna had now ceased to exist.

Too bad that so many of our people emigrated. Here there is so much work to do, so many posts to fill, both military and civilian. It is strange that everything was so well organized, beginning with school and ending with civic and church organizations. Realizing the fact that this whole revolutionary machine was run in the kingdom of Satan, Stalin, not once, but many times the question arose: who was this Chuprynka, the head of the UHVR, the OUN, the UPA? This is not the former, several-thousand-strong OUN, this is a several-hundred-thousand-strong army, and in general a several-million-strong part of the Ukrainian national liberation movement.

It was even more strange to Chumak when he recalled that only a few years back seven million people had meekly died of hunger and that two Polish policemen could terrorize whole segments of the population. Now the situation has changed. The Russian divisions were bypassing our territories.

And again the question arose: who gave these passive masses such national back bone?

These topics were very often discussed by the insurgents, and always in the discussions they returned to the same individuals: Shevchenko, Mikhnovskyy, Dontsov, Petlyura, Konovalets, Bandera, Stetsko, and now Chuprynka . . .

Once several junior officers were engaged in a fierce discussion with company instructor Zoryan. This discussion was heard by Captain Hromenko. Most likely he was pleased with the discussion and for this reason he came closer to the men, who rose from their seats and stood at attention. But the C.O. motioned with his hand and they sat down and resumed their discussion.

Upon Chumak's question, who was Chuprynka, the captain smiled and said: "Comrades, you will probably laugh at this, but I do not know myself. The secrecy is so great, and it has

to be so, that years may pass before we find out — if we live that long,” he added with a smile. “But I have the feeling that it could be Roman Shukhevych. I served under him in the Ukrainian legion; we went through Polissya, and the last time I saw him was in Volhynia. He is an unusually gifted man; but I am not sure,” added Capt. Hromenko.

Thus passed weeks and months. The SKV chased away the Polish Communist gangs. UPA detachments stored supplies and underwent military training and the OUN network conducted day-to-day work among the population. Each village had a workshop of some kind such as a sewing shop, first aid, production of medicine, bandages, arms repair, and others. Many courses were given as well: on first aid, administrative affairs, propaganda, communication, policing, and others.

UPA detachments were growing every day. The Bolshevik agitators themselves contributed a lot in this direction by conducting a propaganda campaign against the “Banderites.” Our units fought the Bolshevik partisans headed by Kovpak, causing heavy losses to the regular Red Army, including staff officers and generals, and accomplished two things. First, every member of the Red Army coming to the West immediately asked about the Banderites and only later about the Germans. They asked for Banderites even far inside Poland. Such propaganda by Soviet political commissars appealed to our brothers from East Ukraine. They deserted in droves and joined our detachments. Many of them contributed • a great deal while in the ranks of UPA.

When the Russian divisions rolled across the Ukrainian soil to the West, the soldiers of UPA were troubled by the idea that they would have to fight these large Russian divisions upon their return. And one could hardly imagine the surprise of the UPA High Command when it learned about the Bolshevik order to their units: upon returning from the West, avoid areas where the UPA detachments are active.

Upon seeing some of the returning Red regiments, the UPA soldiers began to understand their command's order. They were a completely demoralized mass, which was sent to “liberate the world proletariat from capitalism.” Failing to find this proletariat, they robbed what they could, at the same time raped women without any restraint. They were returning like a horde of Tatars. Individual Red Army units

had no commanding officers. Some groups remained in the same village for several weeks, drinking bootleg whiskey and holding wild orgies. Some groups, going on a drinking spree, wandered into the territory controlled by the UPA and sobered up there. One UPA squad sufficed to disarm such a group of eighty to one hundred men. Losing carts, horses, arms, several watches from each hand, and other plundered wealth, they had to return to Russia on foot.

Two months after the war, the creation of the "big power", Red Poland, began. Her most pressing problem was the Hrubeshiv, Peremyshl, and Lemkivshchyna regions, which she received as a gift from Stalin, Roosevelt, and Churchill. No matter how the Poles liked these lands, they could not cope with the UPA. Urgent complaints were sent to the "older brother" with the request that he remove all Ukrainians, and just leave to the Poles the Ukrainian lands. Thus came the first deportation of Ukrainians from the areas beyond the Curzon Line [Zakerzonnya], in July, 1945.

The newly organized Polish army and the Russian deportation commissions, made up of special detachments and detachments of NKVD, marched by the thousands on the territories where for several months there existed Ukrainian independence.

Stationing themselves in almost every village, armed to the teeth, including heavy artillery, the Russian bands for days created all sorts of disturbances, shooting almost every chicken in the farm yards, and from time to time firing artillery into the woods. So far they had only deported several families by force, the rest were harrassed and information on them was compiled. They kept asking what happened to the young men. At night, half of them slept by artillery and machine-guns on location.

At the time when the enemy occupied almost all villages, every stream and wood was under the control of the UPA. Previously built hiding places served as offices and hospitals, and the armed detachments, always in readiness, lived and ate in the forests day in and day out.

Now liaison contact men were the busiest. The UPA detachments were in possession of the most detailed information about the activity and the strength of the enemy forces and command. Under these circumstances young boys and girls proved to be the best couriers in bringing all sorts of messages

to the occupied villages and towns. The UPA knew precisely which and how many families had been deported so far.

All sorts of discussions began among the insurgents. Questions were asked: why are we doing nothing? how long are we going to let these Russian robbers reign?

But as yet there were no orders coming.

Hromenko's company, stationed in the Hushivskyy forest, was at one time visited by the companies of Burlaka and Lastivka. The company commanders and their staffs had a long conference, while soldiers watched their commanders. After the war, many newcomers from the SKV units joined the companies. As yet they did not have proper military "initiation," as the older guerrillas liked to joke. They felt some uneasiness and did not interfere in anything.

After dinner some officers organized a horse race on a large clearing. The race was won by the commander of the first platoon, Chayka.

The men were puzzled even more.

"What does all this mean?" they asked. "Down there is the enemy, and here suddenly these horse races."

But not everybody could know everything.

An accurate report about the situation in Zakerzonnya went to "the top," probably as far as the Lviv region, and now they were waiting for instructions, but there was no idling. Several such messages were sent by various ways and means.

At this point the C.O.'s deputy lieutenant Lahidnyy and quartermaster Sokolenko had the most work to do. Lieut. Lahidnyy, a former veterinary student, was unusually hard working, dedicated and rather strict. The bearded Sokolenko was almost born for his function. He not only knew precisely about the state of weapons and ammunition, but also about the state of every individual insurgent. Suddenly each insurgent was now given additional weapons and an increased amount of ammunition, iron rations, and first-aid equipment, etc.

Something was underway . . .



CHAPTER SIX

Lemkivshchyna, in the vicinity of Bircha, is rather hilly. The hills are covered by a mixed growth and the valleys along the streams and rivers are studded with villages and strips of fertile land. To this is added an unusually fertile broad belt along the Syan River.

Because of these conditions the farmers of this region were well-to-do. As already said, almost all land elevations in the Bircha region were covered by woods. But these wooded zones were mostly narrow ones, all-in-all about 500 metres wide or less. Such narrow zones were usually connected with a larger forest massif, and for this reason it was often possible to march through such a forest for dozens of kilometres, without coming out into the open. Such forests were practically swarming with insurgents, who spent days and nights sleeping

on the grass in the clearing or on pine needles and leaves under the pines. The horses were grazing in the clearing. Outposts with machine-guns stood on guard, and the guards and look-outs, at the forest's edge or among the trees, watched every move of the enemy in the villages, sometimes as near as 500 metres.

It was enough to spend several nights in the forest, to see the rising sun, to hear the roaring streams or the choir of forest birds, or to walk the colourful valleys up to the sparkling Syan, to fall in love with this country.

Bad news was coming from the villages. Several thousand people were already deported into the unknown by the enemy. Many of them were families of the insurgents who, from the forest, often watched the defenceless population as well as the brutal conduct of the enemy. Captain Hromenko himself very often went to the edge of the forest and observed the enemy through binoculars. When returning, deep in his thoughts, he lightly hit the left palm with the right fist as if asking himself: what must I do, fight the devils or wait for orders? The men have to be told what was the matter.

Two weeks later the long-awaited mail arrived. Immediately a meeting of the officers of the three companies was called and lasted for a long time. After the meeting, the companies of Burlaka and Lastivka marched away, and commander Hromenko called an urgent briefing of junior officers.

"There is going to be a war," said the commander, rubbing his hands, and immediately began to issue the orders which he had been planning for the last two weeks.

"Comrades," began the commander, stressing every word, "today all units of UPA and SKV in our territory are going to liquidate the deportation detachments of the enemy. Our company will attack the garrisons in Yavirnyk Rus'kyy and Zhohatyn. During the day the enemy stays in these villages, but spends the night in trenches on the hill between the two villages. Our task is to come as close as possible and as quietly as possible to the enemy positions and by an attack as quick as lighting, with strong fire and grenades, to annihilate it."

The commander then began to issue combat orders. He gave the password, indicated the places of attack by the units, and the rallying point after the battle.

The action was scheduled for two-thirty in the morning.

After supper, the company was assembled in full combat readiness. Prayers were said, the battle orders for the whole company were read, several encouraging words were said by commander Hromenko, and the action begun.

This was in the beginning of summer, 1945. The moon appeared over the horizon dispersing the silvery light over the hills, forests, valleys, and the fields of ripening grain. These crops were the only means of livelihood for the people of these areas, as well as for the detachments of the liberation movement.

The company moved slowly in a single file. Horses, field kitchen utensils, mess-tins, and everything else which could give away a quiet approach were left at the rallying point.

The insurgents moved slowly and each had the same thoughts: Will the action be successful and will I return alive? Chumak shared these thoughts as well. He checked the grenades at his belt, the lock of the sub-machine gun, the spare discs with ammunition, and wondered whether there were any soldiers in the world who, on going into battle, were not afraid for their lives. He assumed that Ukrainian soldiers were exactly like this, that they had no fear for their lives, for the duty and service to one's country and people is greater than one's own life. His Motherland was again oppressed.

There were still many oppressed peoples in this world. In most cases, culturally advanced peoples were enslaving the more primitive nations, but even they had a much greater possibility to liberate themselves. The thought naturally arises: why has Ukraine for ages been enslaved by such a primitive and barbaric nation? Have the Ukrainian people no right to be their own masters on their own land? . . . Chumak heard no answer to these questions.

The company reached a small stream, on both sides of which there was meadow with tall grass. Willow shrubs were growing on the edge of the stream. From a single file the company spread out behind the bushes, at the same time maintaining dead silence. Twenty machine-guns, hundreds of sub-machine-guns and rifles, as well as grenades in the hands of proud defenders of their native land were impatiently waiting for the command to advance and open fire.

The enemy was behind the stream, on a hill, not too high, and thus in a very favourable position. The only approach was through a clear field. Consequently it was necessary to

advance upon the enemy who was well entrenched, through an open area.

Only fifteen minutes were left until the beginning of the attack, but they seemed like an eternity. If one could only smoke a cigarette. On the hill, in the enemy trenches, at a distance of 300-400 steps, one could see a cigarette flame here and there from time to time. The moon had been over the hill for about two hours, and it was quite dark. All the men were waiting in the "ready" position, bent on one knee. In the imagination of each one ran a film strip of his own pleasant, unforgettable experiences of the past. The train of thought was interrupted by the whispered order: "Forward!" It went down the line, farther and farther down . . . In the beginning the company moved slowly and as quietly as possible in order to get close to the enemy trenches.

Suddenly a shot was fired by the enemy guard, bringing a sudden end to all sentimental thoughts.

Hromenko's loud order was heard now: "Forward! On the double! Run!"

The company ran as fast as it could. Another order followed: "Fire!"

The first round was fired from Commander Hromenko's sub-machine gun. There followed the second, third, tenth . . .

Thousands of bullets cut through the air. The enemy replied with erratic fire upon the company, the bullets flying high above their heads. Only about a hundred steps remained before the trenches were reached, and the company quickened its pace. Loud shouts of "Slava-a-a" (glory) mingled with the tornado-like-fire of the machine-guns.

Misha was using his own vocabulary, cursing the enemy's mother.

The enemy fire ceased; the first trenches were reached. The enemy was retreating in panic in the direction of Dylyahova and disappeared into the darkness of the night.

The insurgents were occupying the enemy positions. At this point each was trying to slow down the rate of his own heart beat, but the spirits of each were rising. The commander sat down on a case of enemy ammunition and smoked a cigarette.

This night fierce battles were going on all over Lemkivshchyna. The skies were reflecting the burning fires. This night the UPA detachments struck out simultaneously and

reminded the new "mighty" Communist Poland and its Russian guardians that the Ukrainian people were ready to defend their native land at all costs. This night the insurgents' units liquidated more than thirty enemy deportation centres, and the UPA had greatly increased its stores of supplies from the enemy arsenal.

In the morning the company was sleeping soundly on a natural carpet of grass. The sun was drying out their trousers and boots, damped by the dew. They weren't troubled by sticks or stones or the loud bird concert. Only those on guard duty jealously looked at their sleeping comrades.

Entire areas again came under the control of UPA. These successful actions raised the morale of the UPA detachments, and made the Ukrainian population more confident of its defence.

The UPA detachments continued to be quartered in the villages. Defeated enemy units retreated to the other side of the Syan in panic. In order to justify their defeat, the Poles talked about hundreds of thousands of courageous Banderites, thus causing more fear among the enemy forces and making good publicity for the UPA detachments. It sufficed to send one UPA squad across the Syan from time to time to carry out an action, and the rumours about the presence of thousands of Banderites were spread throughout Poland.

The enemy command, realizing that several-hundred-strong companies were not in a position to put up resistance to the UPA detachments, and could be easily liquidated one by one, changed their tactics. They began to organize operations centres and defence bases. Such bases were developed on the other side of the Syan River and in large towns and villages.

Fortifying themselves in the towns of Peremyshl, Kryvchi, Dubetsk, Dyniv, Hizdrets, Mryholod, Syanik, Balyhorod, Lisko and other towns and villages, the enemy organized raids every few months. In such raids they employed several regiments, at the same time using several small Russian planes (*kukurudzyanyk*) and artillery. Such a raid did not last longer than one week. They went through several villages during the day and stayed in one of them overnight. They often shelled the woods, at times going through a small one, but almost never venturing into the larger ones.

Very often the outposts with machine-guns, defending their units in the villages, were only several hundred steps away



from the outposts of an UPA company, which was stationed in a neighbouring village.

Thanks to a splendid intelligence, the UPA detachments had very good information about the enemy at a time when the enemy had absolutely no information about the UPA detachments. During such raids the UPA detachments avoided open clashes. Almost each time, however, while returning from their raid the enemy troops were ambushed by the UPA in the most unlikely places.

During such raids, which were conducted with the intention of destroying the UPA detachments, the enemy command thought that the guerrillas were probably fleeing or were concealed in their hiding places. At such times the UPA command exhibited great military-guerrilla, strategic talent. In one such raid, the companies of Burlaka, Lastivka, and Krylach fell upon the Polish army barracks in Pykulychi near Peremyshl and routed the enemy garrison.

On another occasion, during such a raid, Hromenko's company crossed the Syan, captured the town of Dubetske, destroyed the enemy base, the post office, and the prison, from which many Ukrainians were freed.

On still another occasion, commander Khrin with his battalion blocked the return route of the enemy regiment after the raid, and in a fierce battle defeated the enemy regiment and forced its remnants to return to their base through Slovakia. Khrin's insurgents on the other hand, riding on cannons and enemy wagons, rode triumphantly through the Ukrainian villages. The Ukrainian population greeted them with tears of joy in their eyes.

Between such hostile raids there were two or three months of peace.

The enemy realized that it was impossible to destroy the Ukrainian guerrilla movement in a short time. It continued to expand its bases on the territory where the UPA was active, villages with a Polish population for this purpose.

In the area where the company of commander Hromenko was active there were three villages: Borivnytsya, Dylyahova, and Kuzmyna. In these villages the Ukrainians were in the minority and had to flee. On entering these villages, the enemy troops were under the protection of the chauvinistic Polish population, rather than vice versa.

Having the support of their own troops again, the Polish

gangs of these villages began to use more and more violence against the Ukrainian population. At a time when the enemy troops would not venture into Ukrainian villages in small groups, these civilian bands of twenty to thirty men attacked at night, stole cattle and whatever else happened to be there, and murdered innocent people. Almost every day in one of these villages, there were mass funerals of the civilian population that had been murdered by these gangs.

At last the Regional leadership of the OUN and commander Hromenko decided to finish one such base, in Borivnytsya, and to teach Mieckewicz's "heroes," at present under the command of Wanda Wasiliewska, a lesson.

After extensive preparation, Hromenko's company began a re-settlement campaign. This time the Ukrainians were resettling the Poles from the Ukrainian lands to Poland. The order sounded like this:

"Help the women and children pack and send them across the Syan. Detain men for interrogation."

The beginning of the action was ordered for 7 a.m. The company was stationed in Yavirnyk Rusky, two kilometres from the village of Borivnytsya.

At five o'clock in the morning the company had already finished washing, prayers, and breakfast and was in full combat gear, ready to march.

Standing at attention with the whole company, Chumak listened carefully to further orders from commander Hromenko.

"Comrades," said the commander, "we cannot take revenge on civilian population. We are members of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army, and not some Russian or Polish gangs. Do not shoot at women and children! Do not give a bad name to our Liberation movement! Behave like the real Ukrainian knights!"

What a wise and spiritually strong man, thought Chumak. He knows very well how many of these insurgents have lost their dear ones from the hands of these bandits, and without such an order there could really have been a massacre. And then, what courage. Instead of attacking at night, he gives an order to advance in the morning. There they have more than sixty machine-guns, hundreds of sub-machine guns and rifles. In addition they are well entrenched and have a good position behind the walls of the church and school. And there

are only two hundred of us with twenty machine-guns, and although we have good battle experience and training . . . At that point Chumak's thoughts were interrupted by an order to move out.

Crossing a small hill, they reached the pine forest and spread out. They did not surround the village but gave the Polish population a chance to retreat through the forest and the Ukrainian village, Ulyuch, across the Syan. In a spread-out formation of about 500 metres in length, the company crossed the forest. As it reached the edge of the forest, the company was greeted by enemy machine-gun fire.

Hromenko gave the order: "Fire! Forward in leaps!"

The company began to move forward like grasshoppers. It was not far to the first houses, perhaps 200 steps, but through a completely clear field, and it seemed that not even half would be able to reach them.

The enemy fire grew stronger, but the houses came nearer too.

Someone gave a cry. Someone fell silently. One second . . . another . . . and another . . .

At last that horrible field was behind us. Here were the first houses. The insurgents were catching their breath. A quick look around and platoon commander Chayka was already firing a round across the roof and another through the window of the house.

Three men remained in the field, but it was unknown whether they were dead or wounded. The first-aid man was beginning to run to them but an order from commander Chayka stopped him. "Boy, you will be killed! First get rid of the machine-gun behind the tree." He pointed in the direction with his hand, and ordered, "Fire!"

The orders were drowned out by the terrible enemy fire, which was coming down like rain.

The first houses were empty, but behind them, here and there, the enemy machine-guns were found. Machine-gunner Vyshnya climbed to the roof, pulled out a few sheaves of thatching and, having a good range, was shooting at the enemy nests. The enemy never expected him there.

"Burn houses!" ordered platoon commander Zaliznyak.

In several minutes, the first few houses were on fire.

Machine-gunner Vyshnya was so busy with his gun that he

did not realize that his house was on fire. He quickly ripped out a bigger opening and jumped from the roof.

A fierce battle now raged for five hours. The Polish population and army fled by a deep stream and through the forest and the Ulyuch village across the Syan. Almost all houses were burned down. Only several chauvinists barricaded themselves inside the Polish church and were waging a fierce battle. Several hand grenades were thrown and the enemy was silenced.

The company sustained heavy casualties: five killed and seven wounded. Of course these were heavy losses, but a large enemy base had been liquidated, which was like a boil on the body. At the beginning of the fight it seemed that the casualties were going to be much greater.

Thus grew the number of insurgents' graves on the Volya Volodzka mountain. This time the company was saying a final farewell to their five comrades.

On top of the mountain was a nice flat clearing, surrounded by woods on all sides. The first houses of Volya Volodzka "the Banderite Berlin," came up to the clearing. This clearing was appropriately chosen by the UPA command of this region for a military cemetery, because of its high elevation and good view, and also because of its good strategic position. So far, even the strongest enemy regiments did not venture up here.

A large birch cross stood in the middle of the cemetery, and in its eastern part there were several dozen smaller crosses. Near the freshly dug graves stood five coffins, almost completely covered with flowers, and near them five new birch crosses. Father Kadylo said the *Panakhyya* (office for the dead). Doctor Shuvar directed the company's choir, which stood three abreast, shoulder to shoulder. The company was missing some insurgents. Some of these were in coffins, others in insurgent hospitals. After the farewells by Father Kadylo and commander Hromenko, comrades on duty lowered the coffins into the graves. The guard of honour gave a rifle salute, and the sad "Eternal Memory" emerging from 200 lungs echoed over the plains of Lemkivshchyna. This hymn was sung best by the insurgents, perhaps because it was very emotional, from the depths of the heart, or perhaps because they had to sing it so frequently. About 500 civilian voices joined in the singing. They came to the funeral from nearby villages.

At night five men who were selected from the SKV units joined the company as replacements for the fallen comrades.

After the "resettlement" of Borivnytsya, the civilian population began to breathe more freely and the area of maneuverability for the company of Hromenko was greater and freer. Nevertheless, several Polish-Bolshevik villages still remained in this region which were similar to Borivnytsya. These were Dylyahova, Kuzmyna and, in particular, the suburbs of Bircha, as well as Bircha itself, which was considered the greatest single fortress of the enemy.

There were other Polish villages, such as Selyska, Dobrova, and Ternavka, but they were not controlled by the Polish Communist chauvinistic bands. The administration of these villages was under the control of the Polish Home Army (A.K.), which was also engaged in a fierce struggle against the Polish Communists and often cooperated with UPA. Hromenko's company visited these villages, for they were located within the range of UPA activity and were completely surrounded by Ukrainian villages. Very often the AK units, pursued by the Polish Communist army and police, crossed the Syan to the village of Ternavka or Selyska and remained there for several weeks, feeling much more secure on the territory where the UPA was active.

In initial post-war months, the UPA detachments in their training and military experience had reached the highest levels of development, and were marked by numerous and intensive actions.

The UPA did not recognize the artificial boundaries drawn on the map between Poland and Stalin's kingdom of Satan. Not a single Polish border guard was able to assume his post so far. The *de facto* boundaries between Poland and Ukraine were reinforced by defence bases along the Syan River, which were almost daily raided by the UPA detachments. The UPA detachments were not only in complete control of the territories of their activities, but also allowed themselves various marches and propaganda raids. The struggle continued unabated.



CHAPTER SEVEN

• One sunny day in the autumn of 1945, the battalion commanded by Prut, numbering eight companies of insurgents, crossed over from Halychyna to Lemkivshchyna. On the way, it captured the town of Bircha and destroyed the enemy base, taking trophies and 35 Polish captives, who were brought to the village of Lyakhova, where the battalion commanded by Col. Konyk was stationed.

The soldiers of Prut's battalion were feeling very sure of themselves in this region. They were not even boasting about their conquest of the town of Bircha. They said that they thought it rather inconvenient to bypass the town, so they passed through it. The insurgents of both battalions were quartering in houses, barns, and orchards. Although only two thousand soldiers were stationed here, to the population it seemed like a whole division.

The whole area was bustling. The people were helping with what they could while the supplies department would receive the guests nicely and was bringing food and other things in wagons from warehouses. Political instructor Zoryan met his old friend Dovbush and was showering him with questions. They were surrounded by local insurgents who were listening to them with great interest. Comrade Dovbush had a gift for story-telling and although he was speaking about a fierce struggle, he was not forgetting its humorous episodes and his listeners often exploded with laughter.

"Muscovites are raging," said Dovbush. "They have brought in a great number of troops, NKVD detachments, and various experts, but so far they cannot do a thing. In fact, they don't know what to do. In hilly and wooded regions of Ukraine hundreds of well organized UPA detachments are operating. A large percentage of UPA members are people from the Dnipro regions. The UPA and OUN have launched a great propaganda campaign among Ukrainians serving in the Red Army during their retreat from the West. Also the unification of Ukrainian territories works to our advantage. The hope for liberation, stifled by the enemy in Eastern Ukraine, is rising each day. Well trained cadres of OUN in Halychyna are now broadly spreading the ideas of independence and sovereignty throughout Ukraine. Successful military actions of UPA are making these ideas easily acceptable. If there were more woods throughout Ukraine, then the number of UPA detachments could be increased and the struggle would then be much easier."

Zorian then asked again:

"What tactics are the Russians using and how often did you have to engage in fighting?"

"In the last three months our battalion has fought seventeen battles, not counting small-scale fights and skirmishes of our units sent out for various actions. And for the tactics? The Russians, so far, are rather confused, for the entire population is on the side of the UPA, and it is hard to fight the nation as a whole."

Here Dovbush remembered something and wrote it down in his notebook, and then asked Zoryan. "And what are our people abroad doing? For they could do a great deal. There are certainly more than a million of them scattered throughout the world."

Zoryan was deep in thought, while Dovbush began to smoke a cigarette. He let the smoke rise above the cherry tree and added, "You should know very well, for you are closer to them and many contacts are going through you."

"You see," began Zoryan, a bit with regret, a bit with irony, "Our emigration is tackling this problem in a 'state' way. There are several political parties; they are elaborating upon a social programme, organizing a government already and condemning the expediency of the struggle of UPA. They are saying that we are foolish youths who are reaching for the sun with a hoe. It is hard for us here to understand that a large segment of our people abroad are criticizing the struggle of UPA, at a time when each nation is proud of its underground. Let's take the French resistance, for example, and the renown it brought to its nation; and in comparison with the UPA, it was very small. There small civilian groups were operating with full support from the Allies. Nobody helps the Ukrainian insurgents. But in our country, under the terrible reign of Russian despotism, whole companies, battalions, and detachments have been operating for years, and some are conducting publicity raids throughout Eastern Europe."

"And what does our leadership say to this?" asked Dovbush, rather hurriedly.

"The leadership is concentrating its attention upon the struggle in the homeland and links with it. The worst thing is that, besides publicizing our struggle and condemning the Russian occupation of Ukraine, our leadership must try to convince various parties and their adherents about the existence and the expediency of our struggle."

Now the men sat down on sweet-smelling grass. Only Dovbush remained standing under the cherry tree and let out smoke rather nervously from his mouth, sending it up the cherry tree as if he were trying to disinfect it. In a minute he began again with indignation. "The Russian Khrushchov is wearing an embroidered shirt to win over more janissaries in order to destroy our people. Moscow is ruthlessly destroying the Ukrainians and other subjugated peoples. The prisons and concentration camps are packed full. In the homeland an uneven struggle is being waged and hundreds of our heroes are dying in it every day. And at no time more than now do we need at least the moral support of our emigration,

which should propagate our ideas, and publicise our struggle in the West. And it is almost unbelievable that there could be any Ukrainian patriot who would be opposed to our struggle for freedom, statehood, and the better future of our long-suffering people." Dovbush, realizing that he was speaking a bit too loudly and too nervously, tossed away the cigarette butt and sat down on the soft grass. All the comrades were silent. Then Dovbush, now smiling and cheerful, added:

"I am sure of one thing. These heroic deeds which are now performed by the Ukrainian people are going to provide spiritual nourishment and be the pride of Ukraine for hundreds of years."

The bright disc of the sun, that showed from behind the hill, illuminated the faces of the listening soldiers and the barrels of their sub-machine guns.

Both officers were leaving for their quarters. The soldiers, who had a chance to hear a great deal of news, rose to their feet and stood at attention.

The meeting of the two battalions had a very good influence on both units, as well as upon the civilian population. The whole battalion of commander Prut was not only well armed but also very well dressed. All were wearing green uniforms and Mazepa-type caps; their boots were polished; the soldiers were smiling, happy, though not very talkative. Insurgents of both battalions questioned each other, looking for mutual friends and relatives.

The members of both battalions came from all regions of Ukraine. The staff officers also had a very pleasant reunion. Some of them knew each other from Bereza Kartuzka, others from exile in Cracow and later from the fighting days in Volhynia.

After dinner an assembly of both battalions was ordered. Almost 2000 insurgents were standing in the clearing. After the report, battalion commander Prut and then Col. Konyk spoke to the insurgents.

The captive Poles were brought to the clearing. They were terribly afraid, thinking that a court marshal would take place here. Instructor Zoryan addressed them:

"Polish soldiers! Moscow wants to subjugate your country, as well as our Ukraine. Your brothers in the ranks of the AK are fighting against the Bolsheviks just like the UPA. Therefore, we are releasing you and sending you to the AK. If you

are going to join the Polish Communist army again, and we catch you, then you are going to receive the death sentence."

The captives were bewildered. The colour in their faces changed and they began to talk and thanked the insurgents for their magnanimity. They were handed appropriate literature in Polish. And thus, written and verbal propaganda about the unconquerable Banderites was spread throughout Poland.

The following day, Prut's battalion went farther west. On the way it visited the battalion commanded by Ren, and then left for a propaganda raid to Slovakia. In Slovakia the battalion divided into smaller units and conducted raids throughout Slovakia for two months, returning for the winter to the Kolomyia region.

The UPA Command devoted much attention to the training of large numbers of cadres, in particular officers and NCO's. Guerrilla tactics are much different from tactics employed by the regular army. Often a small team of insurgents, straying from their detachment, created a military unit, and several such small units could bring confusion within enemy units and cause them severe losses. Also detachments — squads or platoons — often acted independently for several months.

The commander of such a platoon had to have good military training for he had to be not only a military commander but also had to provide for the uniforms, the supply of ammunition, arms, food, information, first-aid requirements, and so forth.

- Each insurgent had a military rank beginning with junior rifleman, rifleman, senior rifleman, corporal, sergeant, sergeant major, 2nd lieutenant, lieutenant, captain, major, lieutenant colonel, colonel, and general. For reasons of secrecy, however, all junior officers and officers were addressed as "comrades" and thus "comrade commander." (Ukr.: druzhe; druzhe komandyr).

In the Komarnytsky forest near Peremyshl, the first postwar junior officers' training course began. Selectees from each company of that region, numbering from 5 to 10 riflemen, through contacts, came to the meeting place. Near a clearing two tents for the instructors were standing. Some distance from them the protective platoon from the company of Krylach was quartered in huts, and across the way, huts for the participants of course were built. Commander Hromenko

sent five insurgents from his company: Chumak, Hudyma, Boyko, Vyshnya, and Terka. In addition Comrade Petya, the commandant of the Security Service from the area where Hromenko's company was active, was appointed to attend the course.

On the very next day the participants of the training camp realized that there was no joking here. Commander Lastivka was camp commandant, and Commander Zenko the instructor officer. There were 185 participants of the training camp, plus the command, the instructional staff, and the protective platoon for guard duty and outposts.

According to the training programme, commander Lastivka was scheduled to devote an hour to drill and discipline each day. But in practice he taught these subjects for sixteen hours a day, not forgetting strict readiness exercises for every other night, and frequent 20-kilometre marches.

Commander X., a former officer in the Polish army, was teaching field tactics. He was a very energetic person, knew his subjects thoroughly and knew how to pass his knowledge along to the men. Ballistics and topography were taught by instructor Zenko. Topography is a general subject and there was no trouble with it, but it was much worse with ballistics, since the UPA companies used all types of arms, ammunition, and explosives originating with various armies. Guerrilla tactics and fighting in cities were taught by comrade Soroka. The history of the Ukrainian armed forces, general tactics, and military intelligence were taught by Colonel Boyko. He was an older officer, a graduate of a military academy in France, a military man to the marrow. Thus passed three months of study and drill, three months of four-hours sleep a day. Though the food was good and the air unusually fresh, and even though the legs were still young, the men were beginning to refuse service and were beginning to drag.

The exams began. The men were studying very hard; even during breakfast or dinner each one was checking summaries or reading lecture notes.

At last the exams were over. Preparations for the passing out and the celebrations were on the way. A day of rest was an opportunity to catch up on one's sleep.

It was a beautiful November Sunday. In the clearing a field altar and a raised platform for the staff were erected. After the Mass, there was a parade, reading of the nominations, and

then the oath-taking. The oath was administered by one of the OUN leaders, Orlan, who later delivered a patriotic address to the participants. At the end came a rousing marching song "*Zasyalo sontse zolote*" (The Golden Sun is Beginning to Shine) by Nedilskyy, which carried over the woods as far as Peremyshl.

In the evening there was soldierly shaking of hands, the clicking of heels, and the returning of each to his own company.

The 'freshly-baked' junior officers of Hromenko's company joined the company in the village of Hrushivtsi. The reunion with friends was very pleasant. The company was in good spirits, the insurgents' morale was high. But not all the comrades were there anymore, for in the battles of the last three months, some of the comrades had paid with their brave lives and were now resting on the Volodzka hill. One of these was platoon commander Chayka. His was a great loss for the company. Commander Chayka had the qualities of an executive officer. He could easily have commanded a guerrilla company, i.e. taken over perhaps the hardest function in the revolutionary liberation movement. His commands and orders always seemed so easy and cheerful, even in the hardest of circumstances.

Squad leader Imennyi, a native of Lviv, a junior officer and a member of the Halychyna Division in which he fought near Brody, was appointed commander of Chayka's platoon.

After several dozen successful battles and skirmishes, Hromenko's company achieved the highest morale and fighting level. Their high degree of conscious discipline, taught and maintained by a wise and dedicated commanding body of the company, was very far removed from the mechanical Prussian type discipline.

The insurgents were well aware of the fact that the relationship of their forces to the enemy divisions, possessing weapons of various types, was not at all in their favour. They knew that the UPA had no allies, with the exception of the moral and material support from the population. But they felt completely free men. This feeling of freedom was attained by them thanks to the ideology of the Ukrainian nationalists, and as the result of an uncompromising struggle.

Hromenko's company had little rest with the exception of

the times following heavy actions or long marches. Drills were held every day and the company frequently changed its quarters.

Coming to the village, the company squads camped near houses, in the yards, or in orchards, where they spent the night. Only in bad weather did they sleep in the houses or barns. Each squad had its own "kitchen," i.e., a light 25-litre pot, made in one of the UPA workshops. Those in charge of supplies under the company's supply officer killed a head of cattle each day and divided the meat, bread, and other rations. The water was boiled in the pot and to it were added the meat ration, potatoes, and beans, and thus a tasty supper was cooked. An additional portion of meat was prepared for the next day to be taken to the forest.

Every few days a squad was sent across the Syan into the enemy territory to obtain cattle. Here the village mayor provided a ration, but in case of his refusal a head or two were taken from the mayor himself. Very often cows or horses were brought which at one time had been confiscated from Ukrainians.

While the supper was prepared, the insurgents washed themselves, shaved, cleaned their weapons, or mended their uniforms. After supper they met in groups, sang songs or engaged in discussion of world affairs. The company humorists had the most success since most of the insurgents gathered around them, and there was no end to laughter. That old romantic moon had a completely different influence upon the men. Lying on soft grass and gazing at the stars and the moon, the insurgents often began the song that "the general staff is our command and we do not need women." But the moonlight did its work, inspired some past, unforgettable memories, and the second song, without fail, sounded like this: "Go away from me my darling, vanish from my sight, but do not forget me." She did not go away, however, even though she could have been as far away as the Kyiv or the Lviv region, or in a distant foreign land . . .

In most cases the company quartered in well-to-do villages, where the housewives prepared good suppers. The squad cooks in such cases didn't bother about their pots but had to do watch duty for two hours at night. So passed the days for the insurgents. While the UPA detachments and the entire liberation movement were preparing for the defence of their

native land and people, the enemy forces were preparing themselves too. For a time both sides gave up the idea of complete destruction of the adversary and followed the tactics of gaining control of the more important strategic points, towns, villages, old stone structures, and some princely castles.

From the time of their defeat in the first resettlement campaign, the enemy forces continued to be quartered in localities like Povlokoma, Dylyahiv, Kuzmyna, Vilshanytsya, and Bircha, which for the enemy was an achievement of a kind. Later, more of the enemy troops had come into these territories, had also occupied strategic points, strongly fortified their positions, and by their presence made it difficult for the UPA detachments to manoeuvre. Several of such points occupied by the enemy were in the area in which Hromenko's company was operating and almost every UPA company in Lemkivshchyna had to work under similar circumstances

There was a need for destroying these strongpoints.

Plans for their destruction were considered not only by Commander Hromenko and his staff, but also by the entire battalion HQ staff with Colonel Konyk at the head.

The enemy's designs had to be frustrated.



CHAPTER EIGHT

In the village of Huta, Commander Hromenko summoned squad leader Chumak, who saluted and said, "Ready for your orders." Upon the indication by the C.O., he sat beside him on the grass. Hromenko offered him a cigarette, and said, "We have received information that the Polish troops are coming to Dibrova and most probably will stay at the castle. Do you know this village and the castle?"

"Only from the outside, I have never been inside," answered Chumak. Chumak remembered that the castle stood on a hill overlooking the Syan. Beyond the Syan ran the Peremyshl-Syanik highway. Chumak used to travel over this road every Saturday from Dyniv to Lubna, and on Monday morning from Lubna to Dyniv. He often wondered who built this seemingly inaccessible castle, with towers and many battlements on all

sides. Today only the name, Dibrova, remained Ukrainian; everything else was Polish.

"Listen, Chumak," continued the C.O., "we know that the population of Dibrova is on the side of the AK, and the enemy troops are not there yet. Tonight you are to go to Dibrova and completely destroy the castle. In case people are living there, find quarters for them in the neighbouring houses and move them from the castle; then mine and burn it. At the same time remember about our propaganda. Explain to the people that Communist troops are coming here and, therefore, we have to destroy this structure. Have you understood my order, and will one squad be enough?" asked the commander.

"Yes," answered Chumak to both questions.

"Well then, go! Get ready and ask the supply sergeant to issue you two German field mines from the store."

In an hour, the 13-strong squad reported its departure.

The evening was still far off, but they had a long way to go. The squad passed through the villages of Huta, Yasenytsya, Poruby, and then near the village of Selyska they turned right to the Delyahivskyy forest. The village of Dibrova lies between Dyniv and Dylyahiv, completely to the side from where the UPA detachments usually pass, and up until today not one UPA detachment or unit ever entered this village. It was protected by two other villages, Dylyahiv and Selyska. In Selyska the population, although Polish, was on friendly terms with the UPA. Here Hromenko's company came to visit several times. Through Selyska there was a special trading route deep into Poland, which Hromenko's company maintained.

It was much worse with Dylyahiv. The militia, the troops, and the whole gangster population had terrorized the entire region in the past, and now they had established their base here, and the approach to Dibrova was therefore very dangerous. But an order was an order.

For the purpose of its implementation Chumak's squad consisted of some of the best men. Chumak's deputy squad leader was machine-gunner Smyk. He carried his heavy "Dekhtyarov" machine-gun like a light submachine gun. Ammunition-carrier Kanya, from the village of Ulyuch, was just as tall as the machine-gunner, only his left shoulder was several centimetres lower from carrying heavy discs with ammunition for the machine-gun. This ammunition-carrier's

audacity was limitless and he was always close to the machine-gun with ready discs to change, even in the most dangerous military operations. Rifleman Buk was another unusually brave man. He had already captured five machine-guns from the enemy and for this he had been decorated. And others such as Voron, Shumnyy, Yuzio, Arpat, Kukhar, and the small and modest Kohut would have been recipients of several medals in a normal army.

The squad halted for a time in the Dylyahiv forest; the insurgents smoked, rested, and then went on. It was already dark outside. The squad was approaching the village very carefully, ready for any emergency. The first houses of the village were quiet, there were no troops; the people were very surprised to see Ukrainian insurgents and were reserved in their conversation.

The squad reached the castle without any difficulty, and found that it was much larger than it looked from the outside. It had two entrances from two sides. In the centre there was a large courtyard, looking like a market place. The great castle with two high towers formed the front side; the other three sides were two-storey buildings with the windows facing the courtyard, and the outside walls were made of heavy stones without windows.

Chumak posted guards at both entrances and ordered them not to let anyone in. With the rest of his men he went around the castle to investigate. Two families lived inside. After the insurgents explained briefly the situation to them, the people quickly began to bring out their possessions and load them on a wagon. They were helped by the men. This operation lasted for about two hours. The squad was completely separated, some were on guard duty, others helped the people to move, still others were planting mines and detonating wires, while the remainder were preparing bonfires around the castle.

In the event of an enemy attack, we would be in big trouble, thought Chumak, and as soon as the wagon filled with people left the gates, he sent up a red flare, which was the signal to start the fire. Seeing the flare, the men with torches lit in advance ran from bonfire to bonfire. The fire lit slowly, for here nothing could burn except the floors, windows, doors, wooden planks in the roof, and the straw in the stables. There were no cattle; the structure was empty, reminding one of complete desolation. By the gate, the slowly detonating wires

leading to mines were lit and the squad left, looking back frequently. The castle burned. In some places the flames were already coming through the old rusty tin roof. At last there came the terrible explosions of the mines. The fire grew bigger and a few minutes later the castle was a big torchlight. The squad was leaving slowly. At first it turned near the village of Selyska to the fields, and then in the direction of the village of Poruby, as far away from Dylyahiv as possible.

"It would be interesting to know what damage the mines caused," said Chumak to rifleman Buk.

"These walls need nitroglycerine and not ordinary dynamite," said Buk.

Long after midnight the squad reached the meeting place in the village of Huta. After the exchange of watchwords with the guards, they learned that an SB unit was staying there at the moment, and that the company had marched to Lyakhova. Chumak received a note which was left for him by the duty officer of the company with instructions to join the company not later than in 14 hours. It took two hours of marching to reach Lyakhova. There was plenty of time and they could rest a while. The squad posted guards, and the remainder of the men lay down on the grass, and in a few minutes a serenade of snoring began.

In Lyakhova the squad encountered much military commotion. Here four companies were quartering, those of Hromenko, Burlaka, Lastivka, and Yar. The inhabitants of the village of Lyakhova were rather poor due to the poor soil. If one added to this the fact that they were robbed several times by the Polish army and civilian bands from Kuzmyna, then a pitiful picture emerged. In the entire village of several dozen farms, there remained only six heads of cattle and not one horse. Here one could notice how the whole family was dragging the plough, trying to plow several of their small plots. It is true that in recent months the enemy did not dare to come to Lyakhova, but the people had to get help from somewhere, to save themselves from death by famine. The matter was entrusted to the economic-administrative section of the OUN and SB networks. The population of this village was allotted quite a large portion of grain, as well as horses from the organizational network to help in the planting.

The companies were staying now in the forest behind the

village, along the road which led from Lyakhova to Dobra. This part of the wood was very clear, with sparsely growing beech trees. While on the ground it was quite a distance from tree to tree, the upper parts of the trees were so broad that they completely concealed the sky. One squad was camping beneath each tree. The greatest commotion was near the stream where 70 squad kitchens were cooking dinner and iron rations, from four freshly killed cattle.

"There is going to be war." With these words the men greeted themselves, shaking hands with comrades from other companies.

The company Commander Burlaka was unusually handsome. A tiny mustache, a carefully nursed beard, a neat uniform. Besides all this he was a great pedant. His "Pere-myshlyaks," as the insurgents from other companies called them, were also well dressed. A great percentage of them were members of the Ukrainian Division "Halychyna," participants in the battle of Brody. Their firing potential was greater than that of any other company. Many squads had two machine-guns each, many of them being German MG-42s.

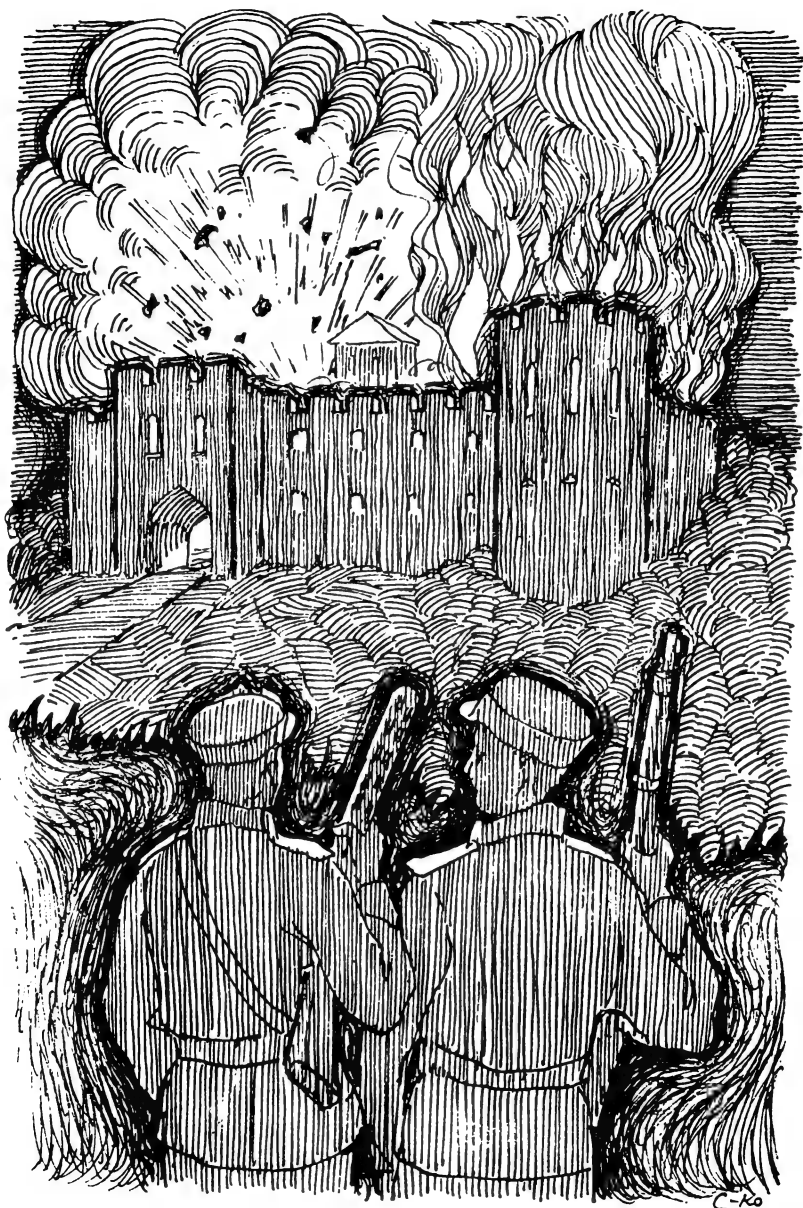
After dinner the battalion was on its way. One thousand soldiers were marching south in single file, four steps apart, between the villages of Tyryava, Silna, and Rakova. The march lasted the entire afternoon and night. For the moment the movement was conducted without any concealment. There was no reason for it. To defeat this battalion it would require several enemy regiments; besides, what precautions could be enforced when the detachment spread out its march over several kilometres. Only at dawn did the battalion turn left, and then complete secrecy was ordered.

At one stage of the march a command was given:

"Halt on the spot — camping!"

They camped on a large hill in the forest over the village of Pashova, in the state in which the detachment was marching.

Along the path, deep trenches had been dug by the Germans. A fierce battle must have been fought here at the time of the passing of the front, and nothing had been changed. In the trenches there were a lot of rusty weapons, rotten uniforms, as well as human skeletons here and there. It was hard to figure out whether they belonged to the "Übermenschen" or the "elder brothers." Perhaps our land is so fertile



C-ko

because it has been fertilized with the corpses of so many invaders. On this mountain there were also ruins of catapults, used for hurling motorless planes into the air. Here, in the past, the Polish "mighty state" taught its pilots the first steps of flying over the beautiful lowlands of the Syan.

The insurgents ate some of their "iron rations" of stewed meat and impatiently speculated on where the action was going to take place today. It was completely dark when the platoon commanders returned from the battalion staff headquarters and transmitted orders to their men. The place of the action was to be Vilshanytsya; the aim was to destroy the railroad station and the bridge and to release hundreds of Ukrainians from transit camp near the railroad station which was protected by barbed wire on all sides.

"The enemy strength is approximately one regiment. Our platoon," continued platoon commander Zaliznyak "is to attack the station. Keep good contacts! Give cover to advancing squads and individual comrades! Be careful! The meeting place is here." Then as a final warning, "An armoured train is standing at the station."

The battalion began to move toward its goal. An hour's walk through the forest, then by the stream, and the station was surrounded on three sides. Petya's reconnaissance squad disappeared into the darkness like cats, going toward the bridge where the train stood. Its engine from time to time gave out clouds of hot steam. Several dozen metres away from the train, between the railroad tracks stood an enemy outpost with machine-guns, as if expecting the UPA detachments to advance by way of the tracks. Six men from the squad were planting a German sappers' mine under the bridge.

"What a beauty!" said Sovà to himself, placing the mine between the beams with the utmost care and trying not to make any noise.

The engine driver lit his pipe and joked with the crew. Petya was very impatient but sure that in a few moments the bridge and the armoured train would fly into the air. Suddenly a shot was fired. Then a round from the machine-gun, and then one could hear the roaring of tens of machine-guns and rifles. The locomotive whistled and started in the direction of the station. By this time the UPA detachments had reached the first tracks and were lying down. Only sets of tracks separated the insurgents from the station, from which there

was coming a storm of enemy fire. At this point the armoured train entered the station. The insurgents moved away several centimetres so that the wheels of the locomotive would not cut off the peaks of their Mazepa-style caps.

The order was not to retreat. Zaliznyak's platoon was lying in position near the train. Everyone wondered what to do. Neither grenades nor machine-gun fire would do anything to the armoured train. Other platoons which were concerned with the train began to throw grenades. The driver and the crew of the train, which all this time was shelling the forest, suddenly realized that "Banderovtsy" were not in the forest but in the station itself, and they began to run at full speed in the direction of Syanik.

The situation improved. The insurgents began to leap over the tracks and threw hand grenades. The enemy reinforced the shelling of the tracks.

Someone yelled, "I'm wounded in the chest!"

"Take the wounded to the back!" ordered an officer.

"No, comrade commander," answered the wounded man, "the enemy shell only drove a pebble inside my shirt."

"Forward!" came the command, and the insurgents went into attack. After a hail of grenades the battle ceased. The enemy ran away in panic, leaving behind more than sixty of its dead and many weapons and rounds of ammunition. The deportees were released.

The enemy bases soon found out about the UPA attack on Vilshanytsya, possibly from the crew of the armoured train or by radio contacts. The enemy bases aimed their muzzles in the direction of the forests surrounding Vilshanytsya and began a heavy cannonade, using American shells. The only effect was to frighten the rabbits. Not one enemy shell fell into the area through which the UPA battalion was departing.

At dawn the battalion halted in the woods near those same trenches where they had camped yesterday, only a few kilometres away from the place of the attack. From this it could be surmised how pleased the battalion's command was feeling, camping so close to the area of operations.

Petya came up to Chumak. He looked dissatisfied. Chumak viewed him with great respect, for Petya was an exemplary revolutionary and today once again had demonstrated his guerrilla knowledge.

"The hell with these German mines," said Petya. "We put

them under that bridge with such care and they did not go off. I wonder what the reason was? Was it the ignition or the wires that were defective??"

He was interrupted by Chumak:

"Petya, how many of ours were killed??"

"Not one," said Petya, "only four wounded from your company and two from Burlaka's company. This is hard to believe. An audacious attack of this kind, trenches, the station, the armoured train."

Chumak and Petya were joined by Burlaka's supply officer, Bis, who was formerly a student, then a junior officer in the "Halychyna" Division, and a participant in the battle near Brody.

"Oh boy," joked Petya, "you could have used a battalion like Konyk's at Brody. No doubt it would have pulled you out of the trouble. It is really a miracle. Such a fierce battle and only six wounded. If a regular army were doing the attacking, there would have been heaps of corpses."

"It seems that the boys know their business," admitted Bis.

"Yes, yes, but it is only because it was our company which advanced and captured the station," joked Chumak.

Similar discussions were carried on throughout the battalion. After each successful battle the morale of the detachment increased. Artillery fire could still be heard from the direction of Vilkhivests. The sun was getting warmer and forcing the tired insurgents to interrupt their discussions about the successes of last night. One by one they fell asleep.

Soon after the action at Vilshanytsya, each company left for its own territory. But on October 4, 1945, Colonel Kenyk again assembled the whole battalion for another operation, this time in Dylyahova, Pavlokomy, Bartkivka, and Lonchky.

After massacring the entire Ukrainian population of the village of Pavlokomy, the Polish resettlers from Halychyna and Volhynia took up residence there. One has to give them credit for their bandits' courage. At a time when the regular Polish army detachments were afraid to penetrate this territory, the bandits from these villages, in small groups of twenty to thirty men, attacked Ukrainian villages, murdering and robbing the people. Many Ukrainians, who had been taken to Germany as forced labourers, were returning home after the war by way of a narrow-gauge railroad from Perevorsk to Dyniv; they fell into the hands of these Polish bands

and were mercilessly murdered. Later, Polish military units reached these villages and used them as bases for further attacks. The situation was becoming intolerable.

Colonel Konyk, together with the commanding body of the battalion and the leadership of the OUN network for this region, decided to put an end to these gangster tactics.



CHAPTER NINE

The battalion was stationed in the village of Poruby, ready to march at any moment. The horses, kitchen utensils, and other heavy items were left behind in Poruby, and the battalion left in the direction of the action. Burlaka's company went to Dylyahova, Lastivka's company to Pavlokoma, and the companies of Krylach and Hromenko to the villages of Lonchky and Bartkivka respectively. The simultaneous action was scheduled to begin at 2.00 hours. The order sounded like this: "If there is no resistance, help the people to pack and send them across the Syan." The order made the insurgents smile a bit, since they knew these villages well.

For several days now a fine autumn rain had been falling. It not only drenched the men's uniforms, bags, boots, and underwear, but also penetrated deep into the ground. The battalion started to march on this soggy land. At first the

detachments marched through the fields, up the hill, and into the forest. There was no road here and the units had to pass over plowed earth, stubble, or potato fields. The American boots which were captured from the Red Army had to undergo their test for quality here and very often they couldn't take the sub-Carpathian mud. At first the rainy red soup jetted out from the boots through the tops, then this soup made the opening at the seams and began to jet out at the sides. Often one could see an insurgent carrying his boots in his hands and marching barefoot. At last they reached the wood and the march proceeding through narrow paths covered by leaves became much lighter. This forest was huge, with tall, mixed trees.

Here the companies parted, each going to its appointed village for action. Most of them were bordering on the forest from the opposite side, with the exception of Pavlokoma, which lies to the east. At exactly 20. hours all companies were lying in positions near the villages waiting for the beginning of the action, which this time was to be started by commander Lastivka.

An order went down the line: "Dont shoot into houses, unless in case of enemy defense."

This order was interrupted by rounds from machine-guns aimed at Pavlokoma. They were answered, one by one, by enemy machine-guns from Pavlokoma. At the same time heavy firing was heard from Dylyahova, Lonchky, and Bartkivtsi.

• Burlaka's company had the hardest time. Dylyahova put up strong resistance with over forty machine-guns and several hundred rifles. The insurgents ran to the first houses, paying no attention to the firing and the soggy earth, and at the same time sent a thick rain of bullets in the direction of the village. Several houses were already burning. The enemy fire became thinner. Soon the bandits with the troops and the police were retreating across the Syan. Hromenko's company had it the easiest. In Bartkivtsi, only several enemy rifle shots were fired, for the majority of local men were spending their time in Dylyahova, the most distant point in the territory in which UPA detachments were active.

"Cease firing! Help the population to pack!" ordered Hromenko who, as usual, was not only a good commander but also a propagandist of our cause.

The insurgents were already helping the people to harness horses and load their belongings onto the wagons, often forcing one neighbour to take another neighbour with him.

All of Dylyahova was in flames, and parts of Lonchky and Pavlokoma, where a fierce battle was continuing. Commander Hromenko was sending a platoon there for reinforcement.

The night was very dark, and the blaze from the four villages could be seen a long way off. Pavlokoma and Bartkivtsi lay on the edge of the Syan, and just across the Syan was the town of Dyniv, where there were masses of enemy troops. On the road just beyond the Syan one could hear a great military movement and shots fired, but no one crossed the river. Two squads from Imennyy's platoon were posted at the ford and two a bit farther down at the ferry crossing, but the ferry was on the other side. There one could hear yells.

"Will they come over to this side?" thought platoon leader Imennyy. "Or perhaps they are thinking that there are no outposts here."

Suddenly the line began to move; the ferry was beginning to float in the direction of the company's outpost. From the ferry one could hear shouting and foul language addressed to the Banderites. These were the Communist henchmen and militiamen, always more daring than the Polish troops. Commander Imennyy wanted to let them come up close, but they began to shoot. In order to prevent a stray bullet from hitting some insurgent in the chest, Imennyy ordered: "Fire!"

Several rounds were fired at the ferry and the boastful cries of the bandits were changing to tearful screams; some fell into the water dead; others were jumping in.

The enemy nests were burning up and lit the way of the detachments to their meeting place.

"How many of ours were killed?" the comrades were asking as usual after such an action. At the battalion's place of assembly the insurgents found out about casualties: five killed and three wounded. Among the five was Chumak's good friend Omega. He had a watch repairshop at Dyniv and was famous for his courage as an experienced and dedicated old revolutionary.

From this action, field gendarme Kamin brought with him a man arrested in the village of Bartkivtsi. In his house more than twenty suitcases of various sizes and colour had been

found, which belonged to the murdered Ukrainian returnees from Germany. During interrogation the bandit admitted that he only helped to carry the suitcases but that others were responsible for the murders. To the question of why those "others" did not take the suitcases he hesitated and then began to give evasive answers. This character was handed over to the Security Service by the field gendarmerie.

After the burning of the four villages, the area in which Hromenko's company was operating increased, and the number of enemy bases decreased to only two: Bircha and Kuzmyna.

Communist Poland was artificially bolstering its military strength thanks to Moscow. Half of its budget was devoted to the building up of the Polish Red Army, whose primary aim was to destroy the UPA and the entire Ukrainian population in the territories of Lyubachiv, Peremyshl, and Lemkivshchyna.

More and more troop transports from the whole of Poland came to the Syan area by railroad and highway. When larger military formations were moving along the highway on the other side of the Syan, they often directed their artillery guns across the Syan, shelling large forests for hours. They did not dare to cross the Syan into Ukrainian territories, against the UPA detachments, more often than once every three months, and then only in very large formations.

Their intelligence about the UPA activities was very negligible and at times even non-existent. In contrast, the intelligence network of the UPA was very wide and efficient; a large amount of information was supplied by women revolutionaries who worked in enemy installations in various cities throughout Poland. Often a secret decision on action reached at the enemy headquarters was known to the UPA Command within hours, and the units were able to disappear without a trace.

After the last action directed against the enemy base, Hromenko's company was stationed in the villages Rybne and Huta, which adjoined each other. At present the company was not undergoing any military training or exercises, it only performed everyday tasks such as morning physical exercises, talks by Zoryan on various subjects, prayers and evening roll-calls. The squads were quartered in houses and barns. The insurgents knew almost every person in these villages,

and the villagers in turn knew every man from this company, but only by pseudonyms, unless he happened to be a native of the area. The real names of the insurgents were not only unknown to the villagers, but to the insurgents themselves though they were members of the same squads, and nobody seemed to mind.

Military successes always had a good influence on the morale of the UPA detachments and the population. The insurgents knew and understood their situation very well. They realized that as long as the entire Ukraine would not rise up with the same readiness and dedication as these Lemky territories it would be impossible to establish an Independent Ukrainian State. For this reason, through their activity, these detachments did everything possible to set an example that would encourage for the struggle the whole of Ukraine. Not one insurgent fought for praise. Not one commander or leader worked for his personal glory. Instead their whole activity was conducted only for the common cause. Even though they were pressed on all sides by the Red Communist hordes, with weapons in their hands the insurgents felt like masters on their own land.

In the evenings the insurgents, wearing clean boots, modern Mazepa caps, and their inseparable sub-machine guns, met in groups. Some joined together in political discussions, others to joke, but most joined the group which began to sing. It was enough for someone to begin a melody, and in a few moments a real choir would form itself. One could also hear girls' voices. Frequently Commander Hromenko could not resist either. Walking slowly, accompanied by lieutenant Lahidnyy, he would approach the group. And then the insurgents' songs would sound even louder. There was no end to singing, one song following another immediately: "We, Ukrainian partisans" . . . , "From the Carpathian Mountains" . . . , "We, the young" . . . , "Let the cannons plow the earth" . . . Or again, "She was sending her darling rifleman into a glorious fight . . ." Long after midnight the last song inevitably was:

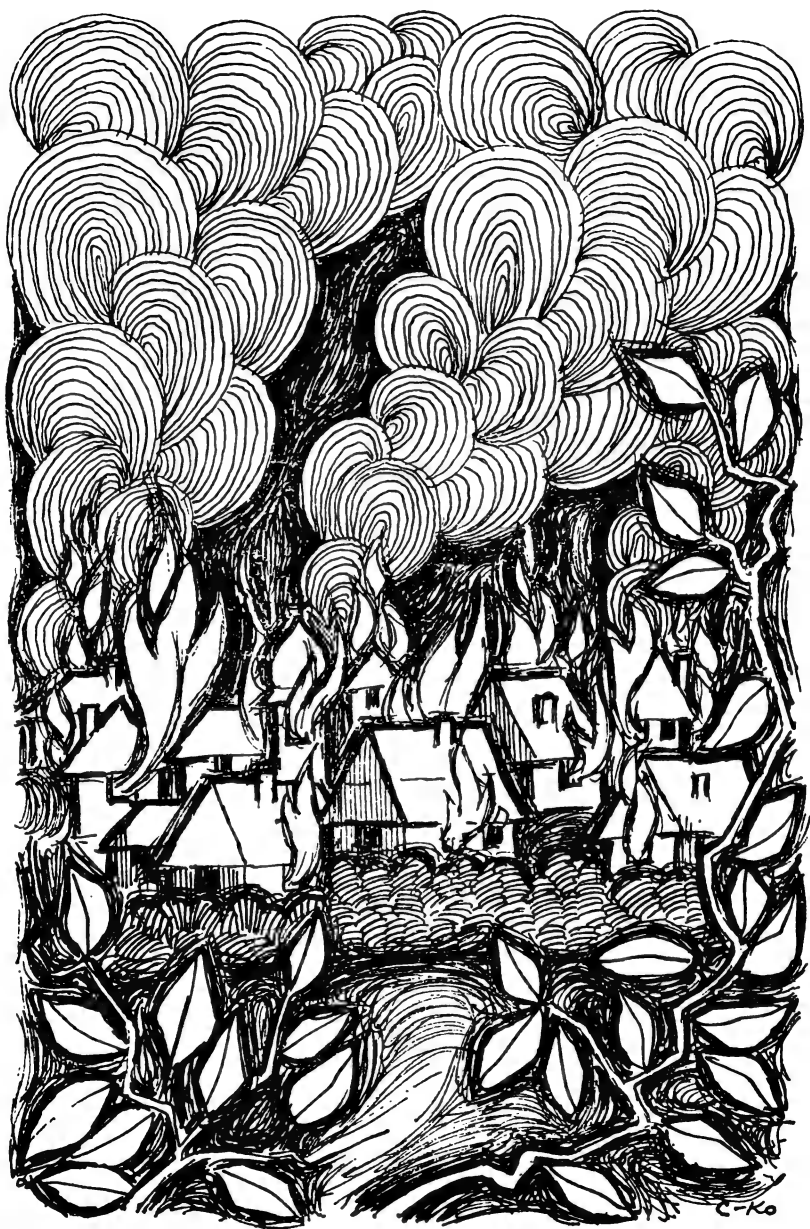
"Go away from me, my darling.

Go from my sight, but do not forget me,

I am the son of the forest, with a heart of a partisan.

The whole country is waiting for my victory."

This song was sung much softer by the boys who stood



holding hands with girls, in other words, by those who were in love. At last came the quiet 'good-night' from commanders Hromenko and Lahidnyy. The group stood at attention, and then parted quietly, each to his own quarters.

Every few days the company moved to another village, but in a new place the life of the company continued as before.

The enemy saw that the smaller bases on the territory, where the UPA was active beyond the Syan, were not fulfilling their tasks and began to concentrate attention on the base in the town of Bircha. Under the protection of large military formations, including tanks, thousands of tons of cement and other building materials for defence bunkers, as well as large food and other supplies, were delivered from Peremyshl to Bircha.

Remembering the first attack by the battalion commanded by Prut, Bircha fortified and armed itself to the teeth, and the enemy garrison never numbered less than 2,000 men. At night they slept in defence bunkers or in buildings formerly occupied by Jews, and during the day extended their activity to the suburbs. From time to time they attacked Ukrainian villages, rounded up people like Tatars and plundered what they could find. UPA units fought with them quite often, but the enemy would rather fight with the local civilian population than with the insurgents. At the first encounter with the UPA they retreated behind the walls and bunkers of Bircha, leaving along the way behind them stolen goods, cattle, chickens, and so on.

For several days the company had been staying in the village of Yaseniv. Here in the last few days there was much activity, especially in the company headquarters. The commander of the first platoon, Bartel, who looked more like a big business man than a platoon commander, called his NCO's to a meeting.

"Chumak, there is going to be war," he said jokingly while crossing the threshold of Troyan's house. Bartel paid no attention to Chumak's salute. He threw his cap on the table, hit the top of his boot with a stick and continued to joke smilingly, as if this "war" were to be some kind of game.

"Well, well. Where is this war going to take place? In Dyniv, Bircha, or Kuzmyna?" inquired Chumak. Bartel moved his shoulders, as if to say that he did not know.

"You want to bet that it is going to be in one of those places?" said Chumak.

"I swear to God that I don't know," answered Bartel. "Check the weapons and the supply of ammunition; we are to attend a conference at 2 o'clock." He raised the stick to the peak of the cap and continued on his way, performing the function of a duty officer in the company.

The conference was very short, for the plans of attack had been prepared beforehand.

"Today we march on Bircha. The area of our attack is behind the village of Lypa, and the remaining positions in a circular offensive are going to be taken up by other companies," said the company commander.

"Today we are not going to take the bunkers in the city. Keep good liaison and avoid heavy losses. Chumak and Misha," said the C.O., "load a mortar and twenty shells on a sled. Because the ground is wet you are going to take it up the hill near Bircha; it is quieter than by wagon. Rifleman Kohut knows the road well. You are to start the action promptly at 2200 hours," continued Hromenko. The watches were checked, the watchwords, signs, and flare colours were agreed upon.

"Do all of you understand this? Are there any questions?"

As Hromenko was leaving, all stood to attention and then left to join their men.

At night a pair of strong horses harnessed to the sled carried the mortar and the shells, first on the narrow field path and then through the forest. Two squads marched along to serve as protection and also as crew for the mortar.

• The autumn evening was dry and warm, but very dark. Contact man Kohut, a native of Lypa, near which the squads were just passing, often made the unit halt and examined the road. Today he carried a great responsibility, for in the event of his error, the whole action could be fouled.

At nine in the evening the mortar and its crew reached the edge of the forest. Before them stretched a clearing. Entering it, Chumak only now realized that the action was well planned. The clearing was very high up, while down in the valley lay the town of Bircha. On the left and right, also in the valley, were Bircha's suburbs and villages, where small lights were flickering here and there. From these villages and suburbs Ukrainians had been deported East, and the remainder had fled to the villages which were defended by the UPA. In the town of Bircha many more lights were burning. Kohut

told Chumak that they were deep in the enemy territory now and that there was need for care because of enemy outposts.

The mortar and shells were removed from the sled and the horses were led back into the forest. In 45 minutes the action was due to begin. It was so quiet that one could hear human breathing. The mortar was placed on a tripod. Misha adjusted the angle and the direction, for he had serviced mortars in the Red Army. Chumak nervously looked at the watch.

Those lights below were at present surrounded by about a thousand men. "What deadly silence. A real hell will break out in a few minutes by strong fire!" thought Chumak.

Misha was still feeling the mortar to make sure that everything was in order, for he would not dare to make a light, and the others, squatting down, were cleaning the missiles with an oiled rag.

"One minute left," said Chumak to Misha. Misha was already holding the missile over the mortar barrel.

"Hit!" said Chumak, and the missile went into the barrel.

"The hell with it," cursed Misha, "the capsule did not burn." They were delicately turning the mortar to remove the defective missile; they had to be very careful so as not to cause an explosion. Three minutes passed before the mortar was ready for another firing.

"Put another one in!"

Again all bent down, the missile went into the barrel. A dull shot and the missile tore the air in the direction of Bircha. Several seconds of waiting and again disappointment. The missile had failed to explode.

"Give me a third one!" almost yelled Misha.

"It's in his hand; it's flying." Chumak counted, one, two, three, four and the missile exploded in Bircha.

The explosion had hardly died down before the terrible noise of guerrilla fire, like hell beating against a tin-plated roof, roared around Bircha. The first houses were already on fire and the fire was spreading. Bircha was surrounded by a fiery circle; several hundred houses were now burning. Misha changed one missile after another, and all the rest were good. Chumak looked down from the hill. What a beautiful sight; but here he was experiencing much more. To view an action was much more terrifying than participating in it.

There, a fierce battle was going on, and its success depended upon good orders and directions of officers and NCO's. Even

a small mistaken decision or command could bring the whole action to nothing. Often one squad or even individuals brought the action to a successful conclusion by their brave advances.

Strong fire was being returned from Bircha and the enemy was beginning to shell the woods. Why the woods? The UPA was in town around them.

Misha fired the last shot, rubbed his hands and said, "Our job is done. Let's go!"

The mortar was put on the sleigh and started on its way.

The insurgents followed, stopping from time to time to look at the panorama of yet another burning enemy base on Ukrainian soil. From the enemy defence bunkers a constant barrage of heavy machine-guns was heard, which was drowned out every few seconds by an artillery cannonade. At the beginning of the action, enemy outposts ran panicking from the outskirts to the fortified centre of Bircha. The closer the fiery circle was approaching the centre of town, the more intensive was the enemy fire.

The Polish families had increased their farms around Bircha tenfold since they had taken over the property of the Ukrainian peasants, who had been deported East, and converted them into warehouses or barns. At present they all had fled to Bircha, seeking protection behind its walls and bunkers. All these houses were burned and the cattle taken away by insurgents to be given back to the Ukrainian families. Bircha itself seemed like an oasis in the desert. Its telephone contacts were broken, bridges along the roads blown up, and the enemy had to use planes or armoured carriers for the delivery of food and ammunition. It was impossible, however, to stop delivery of Ukrainian water, which was supplied by the stream flowing through Bircha. According to order, this time the UPA detachments did not destroy Bircha itself. Such an operation would demand too many sacrifices from the side of the UPA, as well as different types of arms.

The group which serviced the mortar halted in the village of Lypa, waiting for its company. Even though it was long past midnight, the people of Lypa did not sleep but continued to stand upon the surrounding hills, watching the great fire around Bircha.



CHAPTER TEN

With the development and the improvement of the UPA detachments, the enemy units also became more and more dangerous. Regular Polish army units were very often reinforced by special battalions, made up of former anti-German partisans.

After the action against Bircha by the UPA units, the enemy significantly strengthened its garrison. In addition, there came a battalion and a great number of Soviet experts.

A courageous and able junior officer, Misha encountered much unpleasantness from such a battalion. It happened like this.

For several days Hromenko's company was stationed in the village of Yaseniv, while Misha's squad was sent as an outpost to a tiny settlement of Zhohatyn, where they occupied

three houses at the edge of the forest, and were surprised by the enemy. The audacious achievements with the UPA in several years time somewhat dulled Misha's partisan alertness and caution. Instead of posting an outpost made up of a machine-gun unit at the edge of the forest, he posted only one guard in the yard near the house. The squad was stationed for several days in the settlement where life continued peacefully, confidently, and rather merrily, for two girls lived there. Hannusya, the shorter one, had long black braids and was slim, with large black eyes. And even though she talked with everyone and often smiled, an observant insurgent could tell that her thoughts were far away, somewhere near Peremyshl, with her darling Pavlo, who served in the SB. It seemed that she could sense the death of her beloved a few weeks in advance. Zenya, blond and more heavily built, lived in another house. At first glance she did not strike one as a beauty, but she had a wonderful disposition. Her talkativeness, her beautiful Ukrainian language, and above all her lovely voice drew all UPA men to her. On one occasion, calling for volunteers, she chose two, Piven and Yuzio, gave them a pot of wheat and sent them to the grindstone to mill flour. Although Piven felt very humiliated and scorned by his friends, he would not dare to refuse Zenya. In a few minutes a grinding noise was heard from the hallway and a somewhat off-key song: "We are young boys from the forest, we are not afraid of anything, neither work, nor bad weather, nor severe frost."

- Inside the boys were joking with Zenya, and squad leader Misha only watched Zenya ordering them about, and quite successfully at that. "You go and get water, and you peel the potatoes! And you, the dark one, bring wood and make the fires," rang her clear voice.

Piven and Yuzio brought in the rather coarsely ground flour.

Zenya commanded further: "Piven and Yuzio, go and scrub your hands. We are going to make *pyrohy*."*

This called forth several simultaneous exclamations: "What, they are to make *pyrohy*? I'm not eating!"

"Too bad," said Zenya jokingly, "I shall eat them by myself."

*) Kind of Ukrainian pasty.

After carefully checking the cleanliness of the hands of Piven and Yuzio, they began to make *pyrohy*. After the first one, however, Zenya had to relieve Yuzio of work, but Piven, in the Stakhanov fashion, began to make them the size of a fist. At last a large earthen dish filled with *pyrohy* was on the table. The host brought a bottle of good bootleg whiskey "for digestion," and the supper began cheerfully. Zenya insisted that Piven's *pyrohy* were better and stronger because they had a thick ring. After two shots Zenya, in spite of protests, took the bottle from the table, saying that tomorrow they would also need it for "digestion." The changed guard ate the last of the *pyrohy*. After supper, the girls and mother washed the dishes, and then mended and ironed the men's clothing. Misha played chess with the host; the boys and girls sang. After the first song Zenya again began to joke.

"And now let's sing in two voices not in six."

They all sang, joked, and laughed.

But it was getting late and Zenya, again jokingly, took the initiative. "Kerosene is expensive and it's hard to come by, let's go to bed!" Saying good-night, the men went to sleep in the barn. The sentry changed every two hours.

As already mentioned, after the last attack on Bircha the enemy reinforced itself with new forces, including a large number of Bolshevik experts who fought against UPA detachment in Halychyna. Upon the advice of these experts the Polish battalion, for the first time in the six-month reign of the new Communist state, dared to undertake a night attack, and on the very settlement where Misha's squad was staying.

The enemy marched clandestinely, under cover of darkness, and at dawn stopped at the edge of the wood near the settlement. The distance between the forest and the houses was approximately 200 steps.

The long and fierce struggle of the UPA detachments with the Bolsheviks and, in particular, the UPA's defeat of the partisan detachments of Kovpak, forced the Bolsheviks to study UPA tactics and to adapt themselves to it.

Today was the day in which the Bolshevik experts decided to teach these tactics to the Polish army. Standing at the edge of the forest, they knew very well that no more than a few dozen insurgents could be quartered in three houses. They ordered an advance upon the houses without firing a shot, hoping that if anybody were quartering there they would

be caught sound asleep. At that time the enemy had scarcely any intelligence about the strength of the UPA in this territory, a fact later proved by the testimony of the enemy captives in regard to the fantastic number in the UPA detachments. To get this intelligence, the Poles wanted to catch several UPA members alive.

A foggy autumn morning helped the enemy even more.

The guard on duty heard the quiet rustling and saw a large enemy line advancing upon the house. Firing a shot at the enemy, he ran in the direction of the barn and loudly began to alarm the insurgents. Everyone was up in seconds but the enemy attack was so swift, that the insurgents, running out of the barn, mixed and clashed with the enemy. Had the alarmed insurgents at least thirty seconds' time their military action would have looked quite different. Now there was no possibility for a combined defence. By instinct the insurgents began to fight their way to the forest.

The lungs of each man were working like a blacksmith's bellows and the heart wanted to beat the speed record of the submachine gun.

Behind one could hear shots and curses of the Polish troops taken over from the Russian vocabulary. A few more steps and several insurgents reached the forest.

Voron managed to bring his machine-gun, which was a great accomplishment.

Misha seemed to be the most confused of all. While going to sleep, he took off his belt and left a pistol and sub-machine gun in the barn, something he had never done before. Catching his breath, he began to ask Voron how many had reached the forest. Voron released two short charges from the machine-gun in order to frighten the enemy, and then replied; "The rallying point is by the company and only there will we be able to find out."

Around nine o'clock in the morning, Misha and four of his comrades joined the company, which was stationed in the Hrushivskyy forest. He was very depressed, without his cap, belt, pistol, and sub-machine gun. His voice shook as he reported to commander Hromenko and he looked more like a captive. The C.O. tried to listen to him quietly but could not. His face paled and a deep line appeared between his eyes. He said in a raised voice, "Misha, how could you!"

Going off to the side, Misha placed his foot on a stump and thought for quite a while.

The remnants of Misha's squad rejoined the company. One was slightly wounded in the arm, and rifleman Zhuk was dead.

On the following day Misha was placed before a field court marshal. He was accused of disobeying orders and of carelessness with regard to arms.

According to the UPA operations syllabus, an outpost should consist of at least three persons with a machine-gun and not just one sentry guard,

The defendant's advocate blamed the company's duty officer, motivating it by the fact that a squad consisting of thirteen soldiers is physically unable to post a several-day outpost made up of three, plus one on guard near the squad, and comrade Misha could not be accused of carelessness with arms, since he increased the company's stores of arms by capturing large quantities of arms from the enemy.

After two hours the verdict was reached. "Comrade Misha is to be transferred to the company commanded by Yar."

This was a great moral blow to Misha, and a great gain for the company of Yar, which received an experienced N.C.O.

The recent incident involving Misha's squad forced commander Hromenko to remind his men of the contents of the army manual, for the recent successes of the company had decreased its military alertness. Platoon and squad exercises were ordered immediately. Now they went off worse than a few months before.

Upon the order, "Down, enemy fire," the experienced "aces" fell down much more slowly than in actual battles. Even the harsh voice of the platoon leader, Zaliznyak, did not help much.

Commander Hromenko and his staff watched the exercises from the sidelines and smiled. He loved his men and understood them completely. They were receiving practice almost daily in actual fighting. He ordered an assembly of the company, and took it under his command. Smiling to the company he ordered, "Sit down, you can smoke."

After a moment's pause he began employing another approach.

"Friends! I realize that after recent operations it seems rather funny to have to begin with basic training again, but

you must never forget it. The enemy is preparing our destruction at full speed; therefore our alertness must be very acute. You know that due to the carelessness of one guard a whole unit could be lost, and then again, one machine-gun's fire could often secure the retreat of the neighbouring company, and so forth... We cannot neglect that which we learned and acquired."

Appealing to the company, the commander at the same time was watching the men's reaction to his words. Noticing that some soldiers were talking among themselves quietly, he commanded in a raised voice: "Raise your left hand!"

Those who were not paying attention began to raise first their right hand and then their left. The captain called them aside and made them stand at attention. At the end, as never before, he told them in advance that tomorrow there would be a new battle. "Sharpen your arms and be alert! Comrade Zaliznyak, take over the company!" he said, leaving. Not waiting for Zaliznyak's command, the company rushed to its feet and stood at attention, looking admiringly in the direction of its favourite commander.



CHAPTER ELEVEN

On October 22, 1945, the company, in full military dress, was on the move again. Now the insurgents carried much more steel and lead than usual.

In front of the company marched the C.O. with his staff while the scouts and a liaison man preceeded them by several hundred steps. The company marched in single file, ready to fight at any moment, even in a safe territory such as this. It stretched out for almost a mile and curved just like the field road to the village of Zhohatyn. As usual, rifleman Perets was riding the company commander's horse which, for some reason, did not want to march in step but took up the whole left side of the road, prancing all the time.

Mother nature was preparing for winter. The leaves were turning yellow, the fields grey but the sun was still warm,

making it a beautiful Indian summer day. The insurgents had opened their collars, rolled up their sleeves, and from time to time were transferring heavy arms and ammunition from one shoulder to the other. When they passed through villages the people stood in the yards and waved to the insurgents. Young boys were the happiest, for they were always fond of heroic romanticism. At times they themselves performed great acts of heroism.

The company turned to the small path in the direction of Dobra and Lyakhova. Although no mention of the place of action was ever made, each one had a feeling that it could be Kuzmyna.

Kuzmyna, like almost every other village in the Lemky region, was situated on both banks of a stream, at the main highway between the Syan and Bircha. With the population of about 300, the village formerly contained both Ukrainian and Polish families, but now only Polish remain, with a few mixed marriages.

An approach from Peremyshl to the enemy base at Bircha became each day more difficult for the enemy. This was due to work of the companies of Burlaka, Lastivka, and Krylach. In order to assure itself the second approach to Bircha from Syanok, the enemy wanted to establish a base at Kuzmyna at all costs and with this aim in mind sent larger military units to this village.

The UPA reconnaissance reported that in several days a larger number of the enemy's troops were coming to Kuzmyna as reinforcements for the detachments already stationed there. They had already dug in their machine-guns and artillery. The enemy secured itself more from the side of the forest, which stretched out near Lyakhova, about a mile away from the village.

In the evening military orders were given. Commander Hromenko spoke first. "Tonight an attack on Kuzmyna will take place. We will advance from the south, that is, from the hill through the clear field to the village. The evening is not very dark, which makes the situation a little more difficult. Should the enemy notice us, run to the village. Keep good contacts and coordinate the action."

Then supply officer Sokolenko gave further orders. "Camouflage all bright and rattling things!" He then asked

again about the state of the ammunition and bandages, and he posted first-aid men and their assistants.

By the ridge of a high, but still plowable hill, the company was flanking Kuzmyna. The night was much brighter than the insurgents expected. While the first squad of the company was almost on a level with the edge of the village, the last squad had just reached the first houses. The file did a right turn and began to move quietly down. The field of attack was very bad, but there was no other way.

"Oh, God," thought Chumak. "Why doesn't that sickle in the sky hide behind a cloud?"

A hardly audible order went down the line: "Advance most quietly!"

Each man, almost bent in half, made giant steps in the direction of the village. They were already half-way down. The advancing detachment could be seen easily and the descent was becoming more unpleasant. To everyone's astonishment the enemy was not shooting. He was probably thinking that the attack could come only from the forest and was watching it.

Suddenly a shot was heard on the left wing, and then a loud command: "Forward!"

With the cry of "Glory" on their lips the detachment rushed forward. One might wonder why it was necessary to give such a command. Here professional military men were attacking who knew that to remain on a clear slope and give the enemy an opportunity to open defensive fire would mean a sure death to the whole company.

In the section occupied by Imennyy's platoon there was a stream which turned under the hill. Some soldiers managed to jump over it, while others jumped into the middle of it. The enemy fire was getting thicker with every passing moment. The UPA men replied with machine-guns and automatic rifles. The enemy troops were in a state of confusion. Almost immediately before the start of the battle a battalion had arrived here which, according to UPA intelligence, was supposed to arrive in several days' time, and now they began to unload. The first battalion, happy at the arrival of help, let down its guard for a time. This helped the company in its approach to the village. On the other hand, with the arrival of reinforcements the enemy forces were unexpectedly doubled in strength. But there was no time for calculations.

There was only one way out — to hit and hit hard, Otherwise the company's retreat to the foot of the hill would be a sure catastrophe. The UPA attack was so swift that some units went too far and intermingled with the enemy Polish troops. Here and there behind the houses the enemy began disorganized defence action. In other places hand-to-hand fighting was taking place. The insurgents did not waste a second. First the hand grenades were thrown, causing a strong explosion. Then they ran several steps ahead sending rounds of machine-gun fire and again hand grenades.

The newly arrival battalion brought the enemy more harm than good. While the first quartering battalion was a special unit made up of old anti-German partisans, the arriving battalion was composed mainly of new recruits. These recruits came from Tarnov and got their military "initiation" here. They ran in panic in the direction of the forest and along the way some of them cried like children.

The local bandits, who had good practice behind them, put up strong resistance to the advancing UPA detachment. In the trenches behind the houses, enemy machine-guns, which up to this point were turned in the direction of the forest, were now turning their fire on the houses, shooting at everybody, both the insurgents and their own people. The dead and wounded were lying among the houses. First-aid man Zirka was bandaging one man, Baron was running to another one but fell down himself. It was almost an irony of fate that Petya's SB squad should attack the local Polish police personnel. A fierce battle ensued. Petya jumped into the hallway, but to his dismay his sub-machine gun got stuck. He had two against him in a hand-to-hand fight. A long series of shots fired by rifleman Buk through the window of the building and the screams of other wounded policemen gave Petya an opportunity to pull out his revolver and kill two of his adversaries while he ran outside with a bleeding face.

The company's right flank was commanded by Lahidnyy. His orders were very apt and he himself was "showering" the enemy, often putting in new rounds. The C.O. Hromenko was near the platoon of Bartel and Imennyyy. Fighting seemed to be much fiercer there and they were capturing the outer part of the village. Suddenly the fighting at their end stopped. Kalyna's squad moved to the right, where Lahidnyy was in command, and brought bad news: Commander Hro-

menko was badly wounded. Imenny's platoon was retreating with him.

Kuzmyna village was captured. It now remained only to capture the enemy machine-gun nests behind the house and a segment of enemy troops beyond the village in the woods, where as late as yesterday you could not have dragged them out by bulls. The wagons were burned and a part of the ammunition and arms taken. Lahidnyy ordered a retreat, which again was through an open field. The men were carrying the wounded, for in the field one could not find poles to make stretchers. The company caught up with Imenny's platoon. Six boys were carrying the wounded commander Hromenko on a stretcher made from a tent. He was suffering great pain, for the bullet had gone through the lower part of his abdomen. The company reached Lyakhova, dead tired and falling down and instantly falling asleep on the grass. A change of guards was ordered every half hour. The Company Commander had been taken to one of the underground hospitals on a farm cart. Rumours were spreading that he would not survive and all were very sad and worried.

Commander Lahidnyy, Sokolenko, first-aid men, Dr. Shuvar, and Petya were conferring about something. In half an hour Petya with three SB men set out for Vilkhivsti to bring a surgeon, a Jew whose life had been saved by some UPA detachment. This was a pretty difficult assignment, for Vilkhivtsi was reached by way Syanik and there were plenty of enemy troops along the way.

In the evening of the next day the last enemy transports left Kuzma, taking with them 92 dead and about 100 wounded.

The company suffered relatively light casualties, five dead and nine wounded, but they were very hard to bear, and on top of all that, there was worry about the Company Commander, who was the heart of the whole company. Commander Orskyy had been assigned by Col. Konyk from another region, as a temporary C.O. The region was completely quiet and the company quartered for several days at a time in the villages of Dobra, Ulyuch, Yablonytsya, and Hrushivka.

Orskyy was of medium height, small frame, and had straight blond hair, and a thin nose. He was a great pedant and looked just like a school headmaster, which in reality he was.

Without commander Hromenko, however, the soldiers felt as if half of the company were missing.

Colonel Konyk, up to this time, had rarely visited the company of Hromenko, who at the same time was his deputy, but spent most of his time with companies whose commanders had less fighting experience.

After the battle of Kuzmyna, however, Colonel Konyk was staying with the company which was still called Hromenko's company by the insurgents and the population. In reality, this was the First Company of the Fourth Region. At present this region was completely peaceful, from the triangle, the place on the map where the borders of Poland, Slovakia, and the Soviet Union met, as far as Peremyshl. It was under complete control of the UPA with the exception of Bircha itself, where a strong enemy base continued to exist. This peace was violated every few weeks by heavily guarded transports from Peremyshl to Bircha. They almost never left the road, not even for an instant, unless Burlaka's company blocked their way and chased them into this terrifying forest.

The company was getting ready for winter. The supply sergeant and the administration department had the most work. New footwear, underwear, and overcoats were acquired. White jackets with hoods, called "camouflagers," were made for the whole company. Several barrels of meat were stored in the forest.

Only a few days ago the ground was soggy, but now it turned into a hard crust. The trees in the forest lost their foliage, only the evergreens remained faithful to the partisans. The first light snow began to fall. It was so white and clean that it hurt the eyes. Only a few years ago, while still in civilian life, each of the insurgents would have been happy to see the first snowfall, but today, no matter how pretty it looked, it was terrible for them. Winter was the hardest season for the guerrilla detachments. But the laws of nature were hard to change, winter was victorious and began its domination. Snow fell for several days and reached to the tops of the insurgents' boots. Even the strong rays of the sun were of no avail, though for several hours at noontime the warm sunshine tried to remove this white cover from the whole of Lemkivshchyna. At night grandfather frost went to work, covering this young snow with a large plate of glass.

There had been no enemy units in this area for some time

now. The underground life went on in a normal fashion, and some officers were even transferred from the bunkers to the houses.

Colonel Konyk ordered the detachments to camp in the woods, by squads, during the day. Each squad made a camp-fire and underground life went on around it. Part of the soldiers manned the outposts and some junior officers trained the newcomers who were assigned to the detachments from the SKV, which had been disbanded in recent weeks.

Ash and beech logs burned very well and the flames reached the tops of the trees. Any scout could look down from the mountain and know where the company was, and by counting the smoke from the fires he would know the number of squads.

At this stage, some planning was going on by the colonel and the Company C.O. The colonel drew a large map in the snow with a stick, then quickly erased it. Lahidnyy and the supply sergeant from time to time warmed their fingers, which refused to hold the pencils, and then continued to write something. The chaplain, Father Kadylo, instructor Zoryan, and dentist Zybenko went from fire to fire and joked with the men. A little bit to the side the company "aces" built their bonfire. Here were platoon commander Bartel, Zhurba, Kalyna, Karmelyuk, Chumak, and first-aid men Zarka and Imenny. They were joined by the "raiding" group under the command of Father Kadylo. Some were warming their backs, others sat on fallen trees. Chumak opened a German "Feldflasche" and gave it to Father Kadylo, saying:

"Father, have some 'warm coffee'." Thanking him, the priest took a long sip. He began to cough and for a moment could not say a word. After a while he added in a hoarse voice: "This is *real aqua vita*!" All laughed, and he passed the canteen around, saying, "Don't forget to leave some for me; I haven't had a good taste of it yet." The bottle did not finish its round, however, and Bartel had to continue from his own. Taking a tiny sip from the second bottle Fr. Kadylo remarked, "This one is made of barley and one can only drink it when one has a cold and cannot smell it."

No one else had this type of 'coffee', and the men began to eat pieces of cold meat, this time drinking real black barley coffee. Some began to warm the meat by the fire.

"How is the C.O.?" Zoryan asked Father Kadylo.

"Much better," answered the priest, who had had a chance to visit Hromenko the day before in an underground hospital. "Do you know, that in the first three days he suffered such great pain that they had to take away his pistol. He wanted to ease his pain with it, but now he is feeling much better and in approximately two months he should be with us. There are seventeen of them there, with nurse Natalka and a German veterinary surgeon. The nurse has to cook and clean up by herself, and on top of all this the bunker is very small and uncomfortable."

"What happened to our doctors?" asked Father Kadylo sadly. "Did so many of them have to flee abroad?"

"It wasn't only the doctors," remarked Zoryan, "many of our officers and generals are there too."

"And how many 'M' revolutionaries?" added Ben with irony.

"Oh, please, do not touch my former party," said Imennyi jokingly.

"Why? It wasn't so bad," began Zoryan again, who at that time lived in Cracow, "Colonel Melnyk is a very nice person, a good staff officer and strategist. There was never any hatred between him and Bandera, and both of them could have worked together very nicely. Other people were the source of all the trouble!" continued Zoryan. "Take, for instance, Knysh, Sushko, and Baranovskyy. All their revolutionary activity was directed toward the destruction of Bandera and Roman Shukhevych. These activities helped to neutralize a considerable group of former well-trained revolutionaries."

"I wonder where Roman Shukhevych is now?" continued Father Kadylo. "I don't believe he emigrated. He was a born fighter. I remember well the time he left for Transcarpathia and later returned to Lviv."

Nobody answered his question. All were deep in their thoughts.

Instructor Zoryan, a very honest and intelligent man, had studied law, but because of his underground activity was unable to finish his studies. Now he had access to news from abroad, contributed to underground publications, and for this reason almost all questions were directed to him.

"Comrade Zoryan! What's new in the Western world? What will our future be, in your opinion?" asked Karmelyuk.

"The world is still celebrating the end of the war," answered

Zoryan. "Our emigrés know little about our struggle. And as for our future, what can I tell you? Our future looks grim, but our ideas and actions are good and expedient. As a nation, we are no longer crying and complaining. The slavery to which our people had been subjected for centuries is disappearing. We have the backing of other subjugated peoples, who are held together in the Russian empire by terror. If the West were more clear and helped the subjugated peoples, just as the Bolsheviks are helping their partisans in the Balkans, or if it would at least stop its colossal aid to Moscow . . ."

At this point he looked at his watch and said. "Oh boy, have we been politicking today." Upon leaving, he added.

"If I were in the General Staff of UPA, I would suggest that the UPA double its forces and military activity. In the present situation, by saving our strength for tomorrow, we are increasing our future casualties tenfold." Raising his hand in salute, he left to join the staff.



CHAPTER TWELVE

A December day is very short; by three o'clock it is becoming dark. The officer on duty blew his whistle to get general attention and ordered: "Get ready to march! The order of the march is as follows: the fourth, third, second, and first platoons! Put out the fires! Assemble by squads!"

An hour later the companies of guerrillas were quartering in the pleasant homes of Yavirnyk Ruskyy. The people were hospitable and cheerful; the men flirted with the girls and young boys were eager to look at the weapons.

The village was getting ready for the Christmas celebrations. The girls were making Christmas tree ornaments, using thread, evenly cut pieces of straw, and coloured paper. The ornaments were coming out beautifully, but occasionally the strong fingers of the insurgents, who liked to help, would break the strips of straw and wrinkle the nicely folded coloured paper. The new thought about the holidays and beautiful Ukrainian Christmas carols came to mind. Softly they sang, beginning with *Boh Predvichnyy* (Eternal God) and ending with *Lado-Lado*.

In the house where Chumak's squad was staying lived a real Ukrainian goddess — Stefa. She had two brothers, both somewhere with the UPA in the Black Forest. Chumak had stayed in this house before, in 1941, coming from Dyniv with the families of Bak, Tutskey, and Prokop, to see the play "Zaporozhets za Dunayem."

Stefa was then in the play, and her brothers made it possible for the guests to come and see the play, after which there was a dance and Chumak even had a chance to dance with Miss Stefa. It was more than four years ago, and Chumak had kept silent about that visit. He was talking with Stefa's mother, who was partially paralyzed and spent the greater part of her life in bed. One could see from her features that at one time she had been very pretty. She read every book which fell into her hands, and for this reason it was pleasant to talk to her on any subject.

Stefa was serving linden tea with sugar-beet syrup and was looking at Chumak more and more. "Comrade Chumak," said Stefa at last. "I think that I know you from somewhere." Her mother said the same thing.

"Yes, Miss Steftsy, I even had the honour of dancing with you."

She showed surprise and looked at her mother, who only shook her shoulders. It was evident that she was recalling various places, but still could not remember.

"Miss Stefa, I shall help you. I slept at your house once. Do you remember 1941 and the play 'Zaporozhets za Dunayem'?"

In a short while she smiled and said: "Oh! You are Mr. X from Dyniv." For several moments the conversation turned to the events of 1941 and began to be very interesting. But at this moment there came into the room Smyk, Buk, and Voron asking Miss Stefa's permission to heat a few pots of water and a tub because they were planning to have a "Turkish bath" in the stable. Chumak also took advantage of this opportunity.

Rifleman Kohut, who had a funny way of walking and moving about, and who hardly ever spoke, washed his feet outside in the snow, ran into the house, put on clean foot-clothes, and left the dirty wet ones near the stove, where Buk was just putting in new logs.

"Are you crazy! Do you want to suffocate us?" yelled Buk at Kohut, pointing to the wet, smelly rags. The modest Kohut, who almost never turned his head to either the left or right, but turned with his whole body, now took the rags by two fingers, holding his nose with the other two fingers, and went out to wash the rags in the snow. In the meantime, Chumak took a bath in the large stable, in which there was now only one horse, a cow, and a calf, and came back into the house.

At night the insurgents went to sleep on straw which was spread out on the floor, and Stefa with a nice hairdo and even a little make-up sat at the table and embroidered a towel. Chumak sat next to her, lit a cigarette from the lamp, and turned the lamp down. They began to talk quietly. Stefa's fiance had joined the Ukrainian Division and she did not know what had happened to him. She had heard from her brothers not too long ago but she did not know whether or not they were still alive. After midnight the conversation was interrupted by the roosters reminding them that it was time to go to sleep.

The Christmas holidays were coming closer. It got very dark outside, the snow almost melted and then it become cold again and new snow fell, this time only several centimetres deep, which failed to cover the hard crust. The insurgents were wondering: tomorrow will be Christmas Eve, but here there is a mysterious movement. The staff was holding meetings. Scouts were coming and going more often than usual. One could feel in the air that there was going to be "war."

"Where, this time?" Chumak asked Zoryan.

"And where do you think?"

"Bircha!" answered Chumak subconsciously.

Zorian shook his head in agreement and placed his finger on his mouth. Chumak thought. "Mother of God! This is going to be some battle."

On January 6, 1946, Ukrainian Christmas Eve, it snowed in the morning and then cleared up and became a beautiful day. On Christmas Eve every man, especially those separated from their loved ones, was recalling all past years as far back as he could remember. Today, as in the past, the insurgents were remembering their loved ones and past happy years. Today's Christmas Eve supper was going to be served,

as never before, at two o'clock in the afternoon. The insurgents were playing a large-scale guessing game. Some thought that they were going to visit Burlaka's region, others assumed that they were going to sing carols in the village. The UPA command thought otherwise, having good information about the enemy's plans.

In Ukraine, under renewed Russian occupation, the UPA detachments at present achieved the highest military level and were engaged in a fierce struggle with the Red hordes. The UPA strength reached some 200,000 armed and trained troops, and several million Ukrainian people, who also participated in the uneven struggle with the occupying forces, should be taken into account. Their destruction at this time was not in Stalin's power, although Bolshevik propaganda of the time was aiding in the dismembering of Western empires and attempting to "liberate" the "subjugated" Western peoples. The ideas propagated by Ukrainian nationalism were quickly spreading throughout Eastern Europe. The modern Russian "tsar," Stalin, was deathly afraid of them and told his puppets in Warsaw and Prague to destroy the UPA detachments in Zakerzonnya by mutual forces. The UPA command had to counteract such plans. The destruction of the enemy base at Bircha was given top priority.

The civilian network was responsible for the preparation of Christmas Eve supper in the village of Rubne. Father Kadylo said the Matines (Utrenya) and later the supper began with the host made of dye flour. Borshch, vushka, varenyky, and all the other traditional dishes tasted very good. A star was pasted upon Katrusya's kerchief, to symbolise the star of Bethlehem, even though the sun was still shining outside. The hosts provided something in a bottle to warm everyone. After the singing of the third carol, an assembly was ordered.

When they came out of the houses the insurgents saw sleds with additional ammunition, this time mostly hand grenades, waiting on the road.

Colonel Konyk spoke to the company. Greeting them first with the traditional Christmas greeting, "*Khrystos Razhdaysya*" (Christ is born), he explained to the men the necessity for action and the place of the attack, adding a few ardent words of encouragement before the company started on its way.

Similar preparations were made and Christmas Eve supper

was served to every company and SB unit. Now the whole battalion and all SB units of this area were marching to the place of action, having about 16 kilometres in front of them.

The evening was quiet and mild. The clouds moved slowly one after the other. Between them the stars flicked and seemed somehow brighter and much closer than usual. Today these stars brought many thoughts to the men's minds. "Are there many Ukrainian families which can celebrate this evening peacefully and gaily?" thought Chumak. He again recalled the holidays in his own home, the churches overflowing with people. What is happening today? The churches are closed or stand in ruins, the clergy in prison or deported to Siberia. The free church existed only in the UPA detachments.

"Why an attack on Bircha?" Chumak asked himself again. "What can one battalion do against 2,000 enemy troops entrenched behind walls and in bunkers? Here one would need a division with artillery, aircraft, and tanks. Will today be another Kruty? Oh well, let it be Kruty! How few of them we have! When Ukraine loses millions in man-made famines, in jails, in exile, in the Red Army, then why can't she lose one thousand men in the defence of their land and people?" Chumak tried to reason with himself and only now did he begin to understand Zorian's declaration of yesterday.

After these thoughts Chumak's face became brighter, and the march in the midst of friends became lighter, as if someone had just lifted a 200-pound load from his shoulders. He thought about his friends who were marching in front and behind him. There were here one thousand insurgents. They were going to attack Bircha today. And how many of such battles were still to come? He was sure of one thing: all of us will not perish in these battles and the sacred idea of freedom will never die. It will be taken up by the new generations and carried to the victorious end. To gain full control of these regions of our country, the enemy must destroy us completely and to destroy even this thousand-men-strong battalion, the enemy will have to lose ten times as many of his own forces. When the enemy is ready to suffer such losses in order to conquer our land, then all of us will proudly die in its defence.

The insurgents were advancing cautiously, transferring heavy machine-guns and additional rounds of ammunition from one shoulder to the other. Everyone was sorry that

commander Hromenko was not with them today. With him the company troops would feel more secure. It is true that commander Konyk was coming with them, but he had to command the whole battalion.

The action was due to begin at 02:30 in the morning. Chumak's watch showed that it was now after one o'clock. The company was crossing the main highway and was approaching the town from the north. The enemy had two types of defence bunkers. The first were defensive trenches dug around the town and covered on top. These trenches were connected with ferro-concrete bunkers with small openings through which machine-gun barrels protruded, set in the direction of the field of defence. They were also connected with bunkers in the city, constructed between the buildings. The houses, which were burned down in the second attack on Bircha, had been cleared away, their foundations and chimneys removed so as to leave a clear view for shooting. The enemy garrison spent days and nights in these bunkers, always ready to defend itself.

Soon Bircha was surrounded by the insurgents on all sides. The first company was taking positions behind the hill, about 500 metres from the town. Zaliznyak's platoon was facing the Polish church. With this platoon, in the sector occupied by Chumak's squad, stood Colonel Konyk and the company C.O. Orskyy, who were soon joined by liaison men from other platoons. There were no immediate contacts between different companies, and only a certainty that the action was to begin at 02:30 and the known plans for the attack gave an assurance to the commanding personnel and the troops that all was in order.

Fortunately, the enemy did not post advance guards, which made it possible for the insurgents to come, unnoticed, very close to the town.

The soldiers knelt on one knee and waited for orders.

"Another minute and we will attack," said commander Konyk, watching the hands of his watch intently. "Into the town, on the double, without firing a shot!"

Immediately this was followed by another order, "Attack!" which went down the line "attack... attack..." Here good timing was necessary. If, for instance, some company should begin the fighting sooner than planned, the enemy would greet another company with fire in an open field. The time

sped on, but insurgents also ran down the hill to the town faster and faster. Only thirty seconds remained until the beginning of the action. "For the time being everything was going according to plan," thought Chumak, "but woe betide the company which was going to be behind the schedule."

Perhaps because the battalion and company commanders were advancing with Zaliznyak's platoon, this platoon reached the town first, jumping over some embankments and a stream.

To the right one could now hear strong fire. This was Krylach's company, which was attacking from the west. As if in response to it, Hromenko's company also began firing, but for some reason, one could not hear the companies of Burlaka and Lastivka firing. Reaching the river and the first houses, the insurgents heard a long series from heavy machine-guns behind them. This was a bit hard to understand. The guns were shelling the field through which Hromenko's entire company had just passed.

The able commander Konyk immediately realized what happened and said to the company commander: "We have leaped over the first defences with the sleeping enemy."

Now the enemy began to put up strong resistance, for though he slept, he did it in full combat readiness.

Chumak's squad took positions near the church and opened such heavy fire that the barrel of the machine-gun was red in no time. Ammunition man Kanya was handing spare rounds of ammunition, one by one. He had never let down machine-gunner Smyk with the delivery of the ammunition. The first houses were already burning. From a house behind the squad one could hear the fire from an automatic in the direction of the stream. One side of this house was burning. Stepping down, Chumak reached the window and a long series from sub-machine guns silenced the enemy forever, while the flames from the burning house cremated him. It was interesting to know that was happening in the rest of the town, when here in the section occupied by one platoon only, such a fierce battle was being waged. Buk was tossing grenades through barred windows; Kanya continued to hand Smyk the ammunition and reminded him to fire a shorter series and to conserve the ammunition; Kohut was lying behind a small bank and continuously firing at the church's dome. He yelled to Smyk: "Shell the dome; there are two machine-guns!"

One didn't have to tell Smyk twice. He fired at the dome from the machine-gun, and silence fell there.

The firing from the first bunkers outside the town had now died down since the enemy retreated from them via tunnels to the town and assumed defensive positions in the buildings.

Hell had broken loose here. One could use a flame-thrower, but wishful thinking could not help. The insurgents were adapting themselves to street fighting and step by step were moving in the direction of the market place. With a toss of a grenade Buk liquidated an enemy outpost in some shack and captured a machine-gun, a Maxime, and, after some manipulation, turned the barrel in the opposite direction.

Not far away from the stream, two persons stood behind a willow tree. They were commander Konyk and his liaison man. Other contacts men often ran up to them and after exchanging several words ran back to their units.

To the right of Chumak's squad, Loza's squad was attacking, engaged in fierce fighting and farther down in the section held by the companies of Burlaka and Lastivka one could hear hand grenades' explosions and strong machine-gun fire.

Chumak's squad took a position between the church and a fairly tall building. Behind it were a dozen or so captured and burned houses and in front at the right, a multi-story building from which the enemy was defending itself. To the left was the church and behind the church a steep hill extending to the river. One thing remained: to capture the building, for thus one could help the right flank. Chumak ordered Smyk to hit the house to the right. His men began to fire at the windows. Chumak took a hand grenade from his belt and wanted to run up to the window quickly and toss it inside. He made only two leaps when a round from enemy sub-machine-gun hit him on both legs above the knees. At first he could hardly feel the pain and wanted to make a few more leaps and throw in the grenade, but his legs gave out under him. "Smyk! I'm wounded and I'll try to drag myself down. You take over the squad!" The muscles of the hands, which now dragged the whole body and the powerless, wounded legs, began to work furiously and soon Chumak was out of the firing area.

First-aid man Zirka was attacking with some other squad, so rifleman Voron ran up to him wanting to help.

"There is no need, I will move on for the time being. Try

to pick me up on the way back," said Chumak and only now realized that they were advancing up hill, for now he could roll himself down. To the left and right the houses had finished burning, and it was so bright that one could find a needle on the ground.

Warm blood was flowing down his legs. "A few more metres to the river, and behind the river I shall bandage my legs," thought Chumak. Continuing to crawl farther, he saw the body of some insurgent underneath the willow tree. The head rested on the left arm and the right hand, stretched out completely, held a sub-machine-gun. Chumak recognized him immediately. It was Colonel Konyk. Chumak began to call to him, "Comrade commander! Comrade commander!" but the officer did not respond. When Chumak took his right hand, it dropped the automatic and went completely limp. The face was peaceful and the wild blond hair fell upon his hand. On this spot ended his great and long service to Ukraine. Crossing himself and saying his favourite prayer, the Hail Mary, Chumak covered the Colonel's face with a Mazepa cap and continued to drag himself down to the river. The blood continued to flow from the wounded, unbandaged legs.

The fierce fighting, the terrible pain and, on top of all this, the loss of such a good commander brought Chumak almost to the verge of unconsciousness. Yet even though his strength was leaving him completely, his mind was urging him to continue to fight for his life. To succumb to unconsciousness meant death. Thinking about eternal rest, he gathered some strength and rushed to the river with the help of his hands. Falling onto the thin ice, Chumak found himself in water. The river was shallow and the cold water quickly brought Chumak to his senses. The river bank was not high and Chumak pulled himself from the water. Taking the bandages from his bag, he tied his legs over his pants above the wounds to stop the bleeding and continued to move on through the snow. Only now, from the distance of several hundred steps, he heard the sounds of a raging battle in town. From here it seemed much worse than it actually was. In town he had devoted his entire attention to the small section where his squad was. From here he could see how the battle of the whole battalion was going around town.

The frozen uniform and the quite heavy sub-machine-gun hanging around his neck were becoming heavier as time went

on. His hands were pushing through the snow and touching the frozen earth. His fingers were bleeding while the rest of his body was in a sweat. The harder it became to drag his body, the more he wanted to live. Behind him he could hear some voices. Chumak grabbed the automatic with one hand and began to listen. At last he heard his native tongue spoken by the approaching men, belonging to the squad of Karmelyuk. They were escorting two severely wounded men. As if to add to their burden, Chumak found himself on their path. Karmelyuk showed which way to retreat and himself ran to an old house at the edge of the forest and brought back a pony. With some difficulty he put Chumak on the pony, gave him a lit cigarette, and by a small path they crawled to the village of Pyatkova.

"Some Christmas we're having," commander Karmelyuk broke the silence and began to tell about the fighting in his section. "The company C.O. Orskyy fell in battle," he finished in a sad tone.

"Oh, no!" protested Chumak and then told the comrades about the death of Colonel Konyk, which was taken very hard by Karmelyuk and the other men. "Well, such is our fate," commented Karmelyuk after a pause. "Many of our people fell in the battle today."

It was nine o'clock in the morning and the battle was still raging in town. The company of Krylach could not break through the first defensive bunkers on the way to town and there was no word about the success of Burlaka and Lastivka.

In the village of Pyatkova, sleds and horses were organized to carry the wounded and they were taken to the meeting place in Yavirnyk Rusky. There commander Hromenko was waiting for his company. He had just left the hospital and was still very pale and walked very slowly. He met the first group on sleds near Stefa's house, asked about their health and then about the course of battle. Hearing about the death of the colonel, Captain Orskyy, and many other friends, he did not say a word, but left the group and went off by himself a short distance along a snow-covered village road. He paced up and down the road thinking deeply. It was not hard to imagine his thoughts: the loss of so many close friends, and the fact that he was the first deputy of the colonel. He was not completely well himself and now he must take over such a great responsibility.



CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Yavirnyk Rusky, like the nearby village Volodzh, was one of the most nationally-conscious villages of this area. This village had produced a large number of intellectuals and the civic activity was very great here. Yavirnyk Rusky set an example for other villages, and for this reason a celebration was going to take place. The battalion chaplain, Father Kadylo, was to say Mass here for the residents of the village, the neighbouring villages, and the UPA detachments. In the whole fourth district, encompassing approximately 30 villages, there was only one priest, Father Kadylo, who spent most of his time with Hromenko's company. Other priests had either been murdered by the Polish bands or arrested. Some had escaped to the West.

The streets were filled with people, watching various

squads and platoons of Hromenko's company coming from Bircha by various paths. The wounded were on sleds which stood across from Stefa's house. Stefa came out of the house and walked quietly to the sleds. She looked very elegant today, wearing a coat with a white Persian lamb collar, a matching muff, white gloves, a pretty hat, and a bit of lipstick. Seeing Chumak among the wounded she screamed, "Oh, my God!" and ran back into the house. No one knew what Stefa wanted to do back in the house. Returning in a moment, without the hat, the muff, and the gloves she was ready to help.

"What should I do?" she asked. "Hot water? Warm milk? Bring them into the house!" Her beautiful eyes rested on Chumak's bloodstained and ragged uniform. He was stretched on a sled, looking dreadful. His uniform, drenched by the snow and the water, had frozen and looked as if someone had sprinkled it with white powder, and two large red spots were coming through around the knees. As long as his wounded neighbours did not touch his legs, he did not feel great pain, because the legs were frozen and stiff. He was tremendously thankful to be with his own people again, for he had felt quite differently in the river in Bircha. Now he was looking at pretty Stefa, whose conduct he admired today more than usual and, seeing that she looked at his legs, he even began to joke with her.

"Oh, God! You're teasing me," she said and looked into Chumak's eyes. Thus they gazed at each other for quite a while. "Don't worry, Stefa, they will heal before my wedding day."

Commander Hromenko, Lahidnyy, and the rest of the staff personnel were planning something nearby. First-aid man Zirka was fixing somebody's head bandage. Chumak turned to him, "Zirka, don't make a show of us in the village, but take us quickly to the hospital!"

Zirka approached the staff, spoke to Hromenko briefly and, returning in several minutes, said, "We're going!"

Platoon leader Bartel sent a squad along for protection, and the sled began to move. They passed through Rubne, Yaseniv, and Huta as far as Volya Volodzka. Here some wounded were led while others were carried into a house and put on a covered floor. The dressing of wounds began. Besides first-aid man Zirka, there was also in this region a German veterinary,

Syan. Medical student Skala, who often had to perform complicated operations, was now with Burlaka's company and Dr. Shuvar with Krylach's company.

"You are very lucky," said Dr. Syan to Chumak. "Undressed leg wounds could have cost you your life and here you were saved by the frost, but now your legs have to be treated for frostbite as well as for wounds." The left leg was hurting more than the right.

"Why is it so?" asked Chumak.

"In the left leg some muscles have been torn, while in the right a bone has been chipped," explained Dr. Syan. The left leg was therefore only bandaged while a strong oak bark was attached to the right leg.

Nobody knew definitely about the outcome of the fighting in Bircha, for the liaison men from other companies had not yet arrived. The enemy's intelligence service beyond the Syan was spreading fantastic rumours, however, that several thousand Banderites had dared to attack the base in Bircha. News of this attack quickly spread throughout Poland. Because of the Bircha attack, large-scale defence preparations were taking place in Dyniv, Syanik, and Peremyshl.

In the evening of the second day the wounded were taken to the hospital. The sled went by a narrow path in the direction of the village of Volodzh and stopped at a relatively rocky bend in the road. One of the first-aid men removed a rock, which looked much heavier than it actually was, and revealed a hole big enough for a sack of potatoes. It was necessary to crawl face-down for a metre and a half and then climb down the ladder to the bunker. Here it was better to go feet first, otherwise one would have to go down the ladder head first. The bunker-hospital made a depressing impression upon Chumak. It measured seven metres by five and was two and a half metres high. On the ceiling between the log beams and the dirt, the isolation one meter thick was not very good. Here and there water was dripping, since it was warm in the bunker and there was snow on top. In the middle of the hospital were two strong logs, serving as supports, and near them four bunk beds made of wood. Similar beds stood at both sides. Altogether there were twelve such beds. The floor and the walls were panelled with boards. A large ventilating pipe led through the ceiling, but it could not be seen outside. In the corner stood a small medicine cabinet and next to it a

small table on which stood a primus. A little bit to the left lay several sacks of potatoes and two sacks of barley. The wounded slept under warm blankets. Dr. Syan's bed stood by the entrance and on the other side was the bed of nurse Marusya. The lavatory created the greatest problem. It stood in one corner, separated by an old door and next to it stood a sack of lime. Two kerosene lamps lighted the hospital day and night. Marusya alone embellished this grave-like underground with her presence. Without her one could die of boredom, thought Chumak.

After eating a bit of barley soup and then smoking a cigarette, Chumak asked his friend Zhuk, "Has commander Hromenko been here?"

"Yes," said Zhuk, and then added, "He wanted to run away from here two weeks ago."

Zhuk was also smoking a cigarette and blowing out the smoke directly into the ventilation pipe. He had been wounded in the arm a long time ago and it had not yet healed but had begun to fester again. The arm had become completely limp and was much thinner, it should have been amputated long ago. Zhuk felt very badly about it; not so much because he had lost the use of an arm, but because he was now a burden to the company.

Chumak lay quietly and stared at the ceiling, thinking, "Why not make a hospital from the hide-out which the squad built some time ago? There is an inflow and an outflow of water and it is much more comfortable. In the event of discovery and an attack by the enemy, there one could escape by the streams, but here a sure death awaits all. But perhaps there is also a hospital." Only now did he realize how terrible a person feels underground and how pleasant it is to fight with your friends in the ranks of UPA with weapons in your hands.

He could not get the battle of Bircha out of his mind, and he kept wondering whether the attack on Bircha was expedient or not. Even though he did not know yet the total losses, both of the UPA and the enemy, the losses about which he already knew were very painful indeed. Although the aim was not fully achieved and Bircha was not conquered completely, the attack itself raised even higher the military prestige of the UPA.

Chumak could not fall asleep for a long time. As if on a

movie screen, the events in Bircha passed through his mind one by one and the picture of esteemed Col. Konyk appeared again and again. He made another cigarette from Indian tobacco, and thought that if anyone asked him whether or not he would attack Bircha again, he would say "yes" without hesitation, for it is always better to attack than to retreat.

On the second day Father Kadylo came to the hospital with his reconstructed sub-machine-gun. He greeted them with "Khrystos Razhdayetsya," said a Low Mass, and then sat on the bed, and began to tell them the news. "Our losses were very heavy. About thirty insurgents fell in the battle and thirty-six were wounded." He went on to recall and enumerate the pseudonyms of the fallen insurgents, and among them was that of platoon commander Pavlenko. Would his mother or his family in the Kyiv region ever find out what heroism their courageous son had shown?

Even though all were speaking about the great losses of the UPA, Chumak thought otherwise. When he was dragging himself in the snow after being wounded, he thought that only a small number of the insurgents would come out of this hell alive. What soldiers, what experts in their trade, and how much heroism! Platoon commander Imennyi blew up an underground enemy bunker with stores of ammunition. The explosion was so strong that he was completely covered by the debris, but he came out alive with only a few scratches on his body.

- The full extent of the enemy losses was not known. Intelligence obtained through the AK placed them at 120 dead and a like number of wounded.

Father Kadylo told much more news. He said that yesterday a large number of people attended Mass at Yavirnyk Ruskyi. To accommodate them all one would need a church the size of St. Peter's in Rome. The company had been in good spirits. It stood at attention like "a wall" in the middle of a square near the church, in spite of the fact that these men had just fought a heavy battle and were without sleep. The people were very proud of their defenders and invited them home. The company was camping in the woods overlooking Hrushivka. Commander Hromenko was still not completely well and had to move around on horseback and the duties of the company C.O. were performed by platoon

leader Lahidnyy. There was fear that Hromenko's wound might open again.

It was approaching three o'clock. But it was hard to tell whether it was in the morning or afternoon. Father Kadylo said good-bye and left. Chumak was dying to be back with his company. There the nice white snow would be squishing under the boots; the pine trees were beautiful under the snow, the bark breaking from time to time from the cold, and here and there a rabbit would run through. There the huge bonfires were probably burning and the men were joking about the recent terrible fight. And here, let the devil take it! The wounds were hurting more and more. The patient Marusya was washing them with some strong bootleg whiskey, having taken off his underwear, and Chumak did not know what to do. Should he be embarrassed, should he complain, or cry. Oh, God!

Junior quartermaster officer Bida from the company had been hit in the forehead near the ear, by a fragment from the grenade. This fragment tore the nerve and he lost the sight in one eye. A very unusual case. The tiny wound was almost healed in two days, but he had lost the sight in his right eye. One could see that poor Bida was taking this very hard and an eighteen-year-old Hutsul from Pavlokoma was making fun of him in order to lessen his depression:

"Well, Cyclop, how are you going to wink at the girls now?"

Bida himself had to laugh at this. He snapped back:

"Don't yap too much. You look a real Turk with your bandaged head." Everybody laughed.

And thus day after day, or rather night after night, passed slowly, for in this hole one could not tell the difference. Up above the forest air was fresh, but here it was like a fish canning factory. It was impossible to read, for the kerosene lamp under the ceiling was barely flickering and the second one now stood on the medicine cabinet.

Medical contacts men came to the hospital no more than once a week, so as not to leave any traces, for a mass enemy raid could be expected almost any day. When after such visits the snow failed to blanket the footsteps of these men, a squad was sent along this path from Volya to Volodzha to "take care of something," but in reality to cover the tracks leading to the hide-out. Treading over the path between two villages, the squad never knew its real assignment.

The wounds were slowly healing; one was not sure why. Was it because of the barley soup or from being rubbed down with whiskey? Nurse Marusya talked very little, but usually smiled at everyone. She worked almost twenty hours a day. Zhuk helped her a lot with one hand. Dr. Syan also had a great deal of work, often being short of needed medications. In his free time he wrote something by the lamp or read a fat medical book. He was often interrupted by Hutsul:

"Doctor, what are you reading? Are you comparing the anatomy of animals and humans?"

"Yes, and I found a great likeness between the monkey and you," said the doctor, amid general laughter.

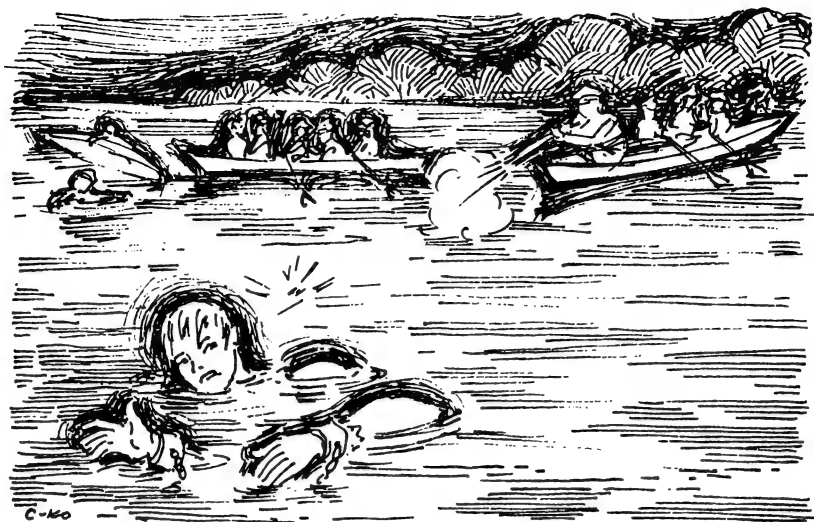
Nurse Marusya was a very intelligent girl. While talking to Chumak, she often reminisced about the Peremyshl secondary school. She knew many of Chumak's friends, like Zenko Prokop, Petro and Olya Libovych, as well as the Kosiv brothers. In 1943, she attended a telephone operators' course with Olya in Cracow on Ditla Street. One could see that she was missing someone, but nobody asked her about it. Marusya had a beautiful figure, a pretty face, hazel eyes, and naturally curly hair which never stayed neatly braided. She had the provocative look of a pretty Gypsy, but she wasn't like that at all.

Rifleman Karyy was brought to the hospital with a frost-bitten toe. The toe was swollen like a dome and began to fester. Marusya let him have her own bed and placed herself a spare mattress on the floor and began to sleep. The doctor, who liked Marusya very much, offered her his own bed. When she rejected his offer he lay down next to her and said,

"All right, we'll sleep together on the floor." Without arguing with the doctor, the tired Marusya left him, looked around the beds where the wounded were sleeping, and approached Chumak's bed.

Just waking up, Chumak began to joke. "Am I to separate us by a straw?"

But seeing a tired and sleepy nurse, he stopped joking.



CHAPTER FOURTEEN

In spite of the fact that each day dragged on and on, soon seven weeks had passed in this hole. In that time the company passed through Lemky villages and forests, engaging in several battles with the enemy which tried to utilize a natural ice bridge across the Syan and crossed to the territory where UPA detachments were active. One of the larger battles took place on the Ukrainian Feast of the Epiphany during the blessing of the water in a stream in the village of Poruby. On that day three members of the SB fell in battle against the enemy in the village of Volodz.

Bida and Hutsul had already joined the company, and Hutsul continued to make fun of Bida.

One evening commander Hromenko visited the hospital. His

face, burned by the wind, was dark as if he had just returned from the beach, and he looked content.

"Are these 'bums' listening to you?" he cheerfully asked nurse Marusya.

"Of course," she answered in the same tone.

The commander went to each of the wounded, asked about his health, and then turning to all said, "Don't forget to complain to your mothers someday, for it's no use complaining here. I know this cave well, for I spent the hardest two months of my life here."

The commander told them a lot about the recent battles and then, looking at his watch, began to get ready to leave. At that moment Chumak turned to him with the request to take him back to the company. Commander Hromenko looked in the direction of the doctor and the latter immediately said, "Not yet!"

"Why not?" asked Chumak in a raised voice. "Comrade commander! I came to this hole much healthier than you were when you left it," he said jokingly and then added, "Out there the air is fresh with the smell of pine resin, and here in this cave, I swear, I'm going to die soon."

Smiling, the captain turned to the doctor. "Doctor, if he won't be able to walk I am going to send him running back."

Commander Hromenko continued to talk with the doctor, the wounded men, and nurse Marusya, but Chumak could not hear them. He was pulling on his mended pants and boots and was ready in no time. Although nobody was watching him, he walked between the beds straight as a candle, demonstrating how well his legs already were. In reality, however, things looked quite different.

Chumak said goodbye to his friends and thanked the doctor and nurse Marusya for their care. She handed him a little package and instructed, "Rub your wounds with this ointment every day, and before that cleanse them with this water."

Chumak was already climbing up; behind him was commander Hromenko. Outside the night was beautiful. The bright moon hung like a barrel over the hospital and the white frozen snow was hurting Chumak's eyes, which were not used to such bright snow anymore.

"Where is the company stationed?" Chumak asked the commander.

"In the village of Volya," answered the latter and asked Chumak if he found it hard to walk.

"No," lied Chumak, but in reality it was very hard.

"Don't you think that Marusya is a pretty girl?" continued the captain.

"Not only pretty but also dedicated and hard working," answered Chumak.

After a ten-minute walk they approached the village. Giving the watchword to the outpost, they entered the village. "Your squad is stationed in the house by the pond," said Commander Hromenko, forgetting the name of the host. Saying goodbye, they parted.

In the house some men were playing chess; Smyk and Kanya took the machine-gun apart and were cleaning it; Kohut was making a new hat for someone, for he was a tailor in civilian life. All were very glad to have their squad leader back. Questions and answers were exchanged. The mistress of the house, however, saw that the newly arrived soldier was not completely well yet. She made a bed for him and asked him to lie down and rest. After the first attempt at walking a long distance, Chumak could hardly raise his legs on the bed and the right leg gave him even more trouble.

The company continued to camp in the woods during the day, so that in the event of enemy attack the fighting would not be done in the villages, where the peasants and their property might be hurt.

After Chumak marched and camped in the forest for several days the wound on one of his legs opened up again and began to fester. One day a small piece of bone came out of the wound. Fearing the return to that unpleasant underground hospital, Chumak did not tell anyone about the renewal of the wound. By applying warm rocks and heating his legs by the fire and then by the warm spring sun, Chumak soon healed his legs completely.

It is hard to find words to describe the beauty of spring in Ukraine, and in particular in the Carpathian Mountains — when the snowdrops flower, struggling with the snow and the ice, when the mating calls of animals and the songs of hundreds of various birds may be heard; and when the roaring of the streams and the smell of the new grass and flowers attract everyone to the out-of-doors.

Not only nature but the insurgents as well were happy with

the coming of spring. "The forest is our father, the night our mother" again sang the marching detachments of UPA, feeling so sure of themselves, that it would seem that there was no force on earth which could take away from them this beautiful piece of free Ukrainian land . . .

Underground literature was coming from the Lviv region. From it, the UPA units and the population could find out about the fierce battles with the Bolsheviks which were fought throughout Ukraine by the UPA detachments. The UPA units this side of the Curzon Line were also not idle. Fierce fighting was going on in the Lyubachiv region and fantastic tales were told about the battalions of commanders Ren and Khrin.

At the time when Polish-Communist propaganda was labelling the Ukrainian Liberation Movement as made up of the worst cut-throats and bandits, the inhabitants of Polish villages greeted the raiding companies of UPA with unusual sympathy and hospitality. They did not run away from these "bandits" but, upon hearing that the UPA detachments were on their territory, came *en masse*, in particular the young people, to see who these Banderites were who had the courage to put up resistance against the Communist empire under the leadership of the terrible, bloodthirsty despot, Stalin. Often, a UPA member with hand grenades, an automatic rifle on his shoulder, and a pistol at the side, had to dance the Polka with some pretty Polish girl.

In the spring there were also more contacts between the Supreme Command of the UPA and the OUN leadership in the West.

The battle of Bircha, which continued to be a topic of discussion, only now proved to be completely expedient. For five months had already passed and there was not even any talk about an enemy campaign to destroy the UPA detachments. Here and there only more daring Polish officers, or perhaps they were driven by orders from above, penetrated a little deeper into the area where the UPA detachments were active. Hromenko's company engaged in battle with such groups in the villages of Poruby, Volodzh, and Ulyuch, after which the area was quiet for some time.

For some reason the command of Hromenko's company decided to celebrate Easter of 1946 in a rather private atmosphere in the Yablonivsky forest under tall old fir

trees. For this purpose the altar was decorated, tables and benches were set up, and food supplies delivered. The company assembled in a small clearing. The commanding officer accepted the report and chaplain Kadylo began the Easter Service.

From the time of Dr. Shuvar's transfer to another company, squad leader Loza had become the conductor of Hromenko company's choir and sometimes the C.O. himself performed this task. That day Loza served as an altar boy and the choir was conducted by Hromenko himself. All the men were in a festive mood and the warm rays of the sun warmed the insurgents at the clearing. All of them were very thoughtful, and it was not hard to guess where their thoughts were on this day.

Unexpected guests began to join the company. They included a score or two of employees from the civilian underground network, Petya's SB unit, the medical service, and the civilian population. Young girls brought Eastern bread and eggs in baskets. Presenting them to the sentries, they came closer and stood some distance behind the company. Only when the company began to sing "Khrystos Voskres" (Christ has risen) did the strong female voices join in to help, and the insurgents immediately brightened up.

Chaplain Kadylo delivered the sermon. It was as encouraging and joyful as the feast of Easter. The Easter bread was blessed at the tables and the Easter dinner began, stretching into the evening hours. The supply department even managed to get several bottles of good whiskey for the tables, which were already piled high with Easter bread, sausages, and eggs, now supplemented by coloured eggs, cheese, and beets with horse radish.

After the men said the "Our Father" at the tables, the distribution of blessed eggs began. Father Kadylo greeted everyone first. He kissed commander Hromenko and his staff and said to the rest of the men:

"Khrystos Voskres! I cannot kiss all of you, but I wish you all a happy Easter and the best of everything!"

The hungry insurgents were waiting for this very moment. Today at dawn they all went to confession together. In response to the urging of Father Kadylo, all insurgents, both Catholics and Orthodox, confessed their sins quietly and he gave them absolution.

Now at the tables the traditional kissing began, in particular where the invited guests, the girls, were sitting. Youth and the fresh air of the forest gave the insurgents wolves' appetites. At this point one could not hear human voices, only the ringing of forks and plates. Father Kadylo, accompanied by an SB guard, left for some village to say Mass and the insurgents, with jokes and singing, cheerfully celebrated this great day.

More and more people joined the company, probably drawn here by the merry songs which echoed through the forests and over the villages, dying down somewhere in other forests. A large group was standing around the C.O. who was now leading the singing, and now they sang in four parts, for they were joined by soft female voices. Another group played football, often having to get the ball from a tall fir or pine tree; the company's comedians staged a hastily prepared floor show. All others joined them in the end. The company's "aces" also had a good time. At first the bottles of "black coffee" went around and then funny jokes. The main parts were played by comrades Bartel, Petya, and "Yasio Makalondra" from Lviv.

The sun seemed to be in a greater rush than usual to end its daily course. Now it was illuminating only the tree tops.

Suddenly there was a whistle announcing an assembly. The company marched away in one direction, and the talkative and merry guests left in all directions.

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The area continued to be quiet. The peasants tilled their land. The UPA detachments were stationed in the woods and villages and at times even forgot under what conditions they were living. The contacts with enemy territories were almost nil. In the economic sector, self-sufficiency was practiced and proved to be very successful. Contacts and reconnaissance went along the established conspiratorial channels and some trading was often done in cooperation with the DK.

Up to this time desertions in this area were unknown, and betrayals and provocations occurred very seldom. Then suddenly one day, like lightning from a clear blue sky, there occurred a betrayal by a man who held a relatively high position in the underground. He betrayed the UPA and then

crossed over to the enemy. His pseudonym was Vyshynskyy, aged around 30, holding the post of an administrative officer for several regions. He knew many people in various posts, the location of many stores of ammunition, food, uniforms, as well as some underground hospitals and hideouts. Had the enemy been more courageous, they could have done much harm to the whole liberation movement in this region.

The enemy pinned a badge on Vyshynskyy and made him a lieutenant of the Polish police. His father was confined to a Peremyshl jail and it seems that the enemy got through to him through his father. His attempted persuasion of the enemy to go to the various betrayed points proved to be unsuccessful. The enemy did not yet trust him fully and was afraid to check the information, fearing the UPA detachments. In the meantime the UPA hospitals and stores known to Vyshynskyy were transferred to other locations and the bunkers were mined.

In several weeks' time the enemy ventured an attack on one such bunker near Zelenka in the Peremyshl region and lost three men, who were blown to pieces by a mine.

"We can be grateful that this scoundrel was not a double agent," said the commander of SB for several regions. "He had great freedom of movement and if he had stayed with the UPA and at the same worked as the enemy's informer, he would have been hard to pinpoint."

Side by side with the great activity of the larger UPA detachments, the smaller units, such as platoons and squads, were also working hard. These groups blew up various bridges, captured arms, medicine, or leather, or destroyed an enemy police station after several warnings to stop persecuting the Ukrainian population still remaining beyond the Syan. There were also instances, as in the village N., where the chief of the Polish police was a member of the AK and cooperated with the SB.

The most dangerous tasks and actions deep in the enemy territory were performed by the SB fighters. At times they performed such dangerous actions in small groups at night, while wearing military uniforms. On other occasions with falsified documents, wearing civilian clothes and with pistols at their sides, they drove or walked through tens of kilometres of enemy territory, performing the planned actions. Getting used to this dangerous work, these people often became

careless. As a result, an able and courageous fighter, Sova, was captured by the enemy while staying in a very unsafe place. An enemy unit numbering about thirty men surrounded the quarters and four of them lay in wait for him in the passage. Four enemies jumped Sova, who was just coming out, and with hard blows with revolvers brought him down to the floor. Two of Sova's comrades with an automatic fought their way out, through the window and then through the yard, fleeing from the encirclement and leaving two enemy dead behind.

The enemy then began to torture Sova, hoping to obtain valuable information. Sova began to use tricks. He told them that he knew of only one bunker, where the leader of SB had his headquarters for several regions. As an object of "betrayal" he chose one dug-out cave near the woods in a place which was relatively safe for the enemy, hoping to entice him there. Sova thought that when he halted with the enemy in the area where UPA was active, perhaps he could find an opportunity to save himself.

The enemy actually caught itself on this hook. Two selected enemy companies were going to the SB "headquarters," bringing along Sova in chains. Coming to the excavated hole the enemy saw that Sova had betrayed them and they turned in the direction of the Syan.

There were no UPA units in the vicinity at that time and it was hard for someone in chains to break loose. Silent, a foot taller than the others, Sova was returning to Dyniv to face further tortures.

On the Syan the ferry had been destroyed by some UPA squad long ago and the enemy had to cross in small boats. Sova promised himself one thing: beyond the Syan the enemy is not going to have me. Rocking the boat with the enemy he turned it over and in chains began to swim down the river. Some boats began to save the drowning soldiers from the overturned boat while others turned after Sova. Already close to the bushes Sova was hit by a series from an automatic and thus heroically ended his life.

Fantastic rumours were spread about the UPA throughout Poland. "Thirty thousand" came from the Volhynia, a "division" of Rizun is operating beyond the Syan, and so forth and so on. Even the command of the Polish Red Army had very meager information about the UPA detachments.

They received much information from the traitor Vyshynskyy, who gave them the number of partisans in the entire Zakerzonnya as about five thousand men. Against these detachments the enemy had two divisions at present scattered throughout defence bases from Yaroslav to the Slovak border. Finding out, more or less, about the strength of the UPA, the enemy command in Warsaw began to pressure its regiments to act. One of such actions was undertaken by a "daring" regiment from Bircha, passing in the early morning hours through the villages of Lypa and Zhohatyn in the direction of the village of Yavirnyk Rusky. The enemy still did not dare to attack the woods.



CHAPTER FIFTEEN

The company of Commander Hromenko was spending this night in Yavirnyk Rusky, intending to go into the forest for the day. In the morning a warm rain began to fall and the commander ordered them to remain in the village.

Around nine o'clock the scouts brought news that the enemy was approaching the village. An alert was given and in several minutes the company was ordered to leave the village and to take up fighting positions outside it.

The enemy was moving very slowly even though it was not sure whether the company was quartering in the village or not. He was not marching straight at the village but was utilizing a deep path which stretched almost parallel with the village at a distance of about 300 to 400 steps. The insurgents

could see the approaching enemy very well, who began to take up positions along the village from the side of Borivnytsya.

At the end of the village the path turned into the village. Here the enemy halted, positioned itself, and sent a scouting party into the village. Both sides had good fighting positions. The company had a good location behind trees, fences, and ditches, having natural protection and cover. The enemy assumed only a protective position. Between the fighting positions stretched a clear field, gently sloping in the direction of the village. The enemy could see a large commotion in the village. The women were rounding up cattle behind the houses and drawing water from wells in case of fire.

The insurgents were lying in wait, winking at each other and waiting to be greeted by Red Teddies, Johnnies, and Zigmunds. The captain sent one squad through the village of Rybne, to come upon the enemy from behind and open fire. About an hour's time was needed for this detour.

A loud command was heard from the enemy positions.

Across from the path that turned into the village and some old walls, the platoon commanded by Imennyy took up defensive positions. Machine-gunner Slyva had the best firing range. The enemy scouts emerged from behind the bend in the road. Slyva let them come closer and then stopped them for good. Only now did the enemy become sure of the presence of the insurgents in the village and opened fire. In response to this, and in order to confirm the strength of the insurgents, the company fired a round in the direction of the enemy, then halted the fire and waited for the enemy attack.

Buk bet Smyk a pouch of tobacco that the enemy would not attack. Not knowing Smyk's opinion, he asked, "What do you say? Will he?"

"No, he won't," replied Smyk.

"Oh well, I also think that he won't," confirmed Buk, and the bet was off.

At the left flank Russian cursing was heard and shouts of "Forward." They were supported by the Polish command: "Forward," and a strong fire. But nobody moved and the enemy continued its strong shelling from the defensive positions as though it did not hear the command to go forward.

Suddenly a daring captain, wearing a red cloak, jumped from the path and into the field, waving both his right and

left hands in the direction of the village. His hands stretched the cloak and he looked like a huge red butterfly. He was foaming at the mouth and every few seconds yelled: "Forward!"

But the fear of the UPA was stronger than his command and this poor red butterfly was cut down by an insurgent's bullet, thus ending his services to Communism.

The enemy was running in panic. It was speeded up in the back by the fire of Honta's squad.

"We are going to have peace for several weeks," the boys were joking after the fight.

A new battalion commander, Bayda, was assigned to the detachment. He was transferred from the staff of commander Ren. Bayda was a man of medium height, blond hair, very quiet, not very talkative and almost always engrossed in his thoughts. He did not like jokes but much preferred discipline. He showed recognition by a mild smile. He was a former commander of an UPA company during the German occupation and with it he broke through the passing Bolshevik front. A native of the Poltava region, he was an officer in the Red Army. He left it in 1941 and since then was engaged in the struggle for Ukraine's liberation. Looking at colonel Bayda and his intelligent behaviour from the sidelines, it was hard to believe that this man had finished a Soviet school, knowing the intelligence level of the officers of the Red Army. He looked more like a graduate of some Western military academy. He spoke good Ukrainian and was a modern type of Ukrainian officer. He spent some time with each company of his battalion but mostly with Hromenko's company.

In the spring of 1946, in the Kurmanytskyy forest by Pere-myshl a second contingent of junior officers was being trained. The participants numbered about 150 men. All of them had had extensive military experience and were now supplementing it by theory.

It seemed that in this case traitor Vyshynskyy did a favour for the enemy by telling them that the junior officers' training camp and the defending platoon numbered no more than 200 men and could be easily liquidated. Some joker in the enemy staff proposed a Solomon-like solution: send a Polish junior officers' school from Peremyshl to liquidate the UPA counterpart. The enemy planners were already waiting for nominations for military honours. The Communist Polish press was

preparing materials about the great achievements of the young heroes from the army's junior officers' school.

On April 27, 1946, the enemy officers' training school, with the assistance of 300 regular troops, set out through Znesinnya and Zelenka in the direction of Kurmanytsky forest.

In the meantime, several-years-old UPA reconnaissance was working very well. From Peremyshl the following news was received: "All four of us are coming to visit you today." This meant that 400 people were coming after them. This news was followed by more information. A scout on a sweaty Hutsul pony was coming straight to the training company. He was stopped by the guards. Exchanging watchwords, he was permitted to proceed to the company. The command immediately put the company on the alert and began to make plans. The aim of the company was not to engage in battle but to train junior officers in the best way possible. Hence the command of the training company decided the following:

"Assume a comfortable defensive position and wait for the enemy. Should the enemy bypass you, do not chase him."

After field exercises, the insurgents were relaxing and joking at positions. At about 2 p.m., enemy voices were heard, coming straight toward the positions occupied by the UPA company. The trainees were the best men selected from UPA companies of the Peremyshl region. The positions held by the training company stretched between a thick grove of trees. Twenty steps beyond, the wood ended and a long but narrow clearing began. Loud cries were heard behind the clearing in the forest. The young enemy trainees, brought up on the chauvinistic writings of Sienkiewicz and large doses of Communist propaganda, were very sure of themselves. Reaching the edge of the woods, they did not even stop but immediately began to cross the clearing.

The enemy detachment had two flags. One was red-white, and the other was the flag of the junior officers' school. They were very well armed and also carried field radios and, no one knows for what purpose, a portable broadcasting station. The advance of the enemy was so self-assured that it looked more like boys playing in the pasture.

After letting the enemy come as close as thirty steps, the insurgents opened fire. Both flag-bearers got the most lead. After the first rounds, many enemy corpses were lying about in the clearing. The battle lasted only a few minutes, and the

enemy remnants fled in panic by various roads, heading for Peremyshl.

The UPA training company had tremendous gains. It captured a great deal of arms and ammunition, a radio station, and field radios. With these devices the UPA trainees contacted the enemy command and had a good laugh at them. At this moment the commandant of the training camp, Zenko, spoke in a serious tone in Ukrainian:

"Here is the commandant of the second junior officers' training camp." To the question, "What is your name?" he answered, "This is not important." Commander Zenko continued, "Here in the clearing thirty-four of your dead are lying. Please come and get them and bury them. Or should we bury them? Do not fight against us, but turn your arms against our greatest mutual enemy: Russia."

He received foul language in reply.

Signing off, he turned to the duty officer and commanded: "Break up camp and be ready to march after supper."

The documents of the enemy dead were checked. After attaching underground literature to them, they were sent on the next day to relatives in various parts of Poland.

At night the training company changed the location of their camp to the wood overlooking Kupna and there continued to train in peace.

In Peremyshl the defeat created confusion in the midst of the enemy. Constant telephone conversations were held between Peremyshl and Warsaw. Polish actions against the UPA in general were headed by a Red chieftain and Moscow's stooge, Walter Swierczewski. Although he was a former criminal, a participant in the Spanish Civil War, and much decorated by Red Russia, he could not do much against the UPA detachments. At present he was negotiating with Moscow and Prague about a mutual pact against the UPA.

Large enemy units left Peremyshl for the Kormanytskyy forest to pick up their dead. This time they proceeded cautiously and slowly. It took them almost a whole day to approach the place where their "heroes" were resting in peace, those same heroes who yesterday were so arrogantly going to destroy the Banderites.

On April 30, Peremyshl was the site of much military movement, when government representatives and generals came from Warsaw and other cities. The cemetery was filled

with the military and civilian population, while a military funeral of the Polish "heroes" who fell in battle took place. Their coffins lay on draped military wagons and various generals addressed the mourners. Near the end of the ceremonies a colonel from the Peremyshl garrison swore that he would revenge the death of the fallen.

In the crowd attending the funeral was Natalka, an UPA agent, who was wearing a black kerchief as a sign of mourning. She lived in Peremyshl with a sister who was married to a Pole. She strained her ears and tried to remember every word, while from time to time snapping a picture with an old and primitive-looking camera, which had been prepared for her especially by UPA technicians. Not far from where she stood she encountered Olya, who was there on a similar assignment. They did not speak but went in different directions into the crowd and listened to the conversations of the population. These conversations were fantastic. Some were moving West from Peremyshl, because here soon everything would be under the control of the Banderites; other were saying that over seven hundred Banderites fell in this battle; and there were many more ridiculous tales.

One could have a good laugh at Natalka's report, except that the colonel's oath had to be taken seriously. This Pole was proud and he would definitely want to make good his promise. He really began to prepare for this action, gathering a good regiment and, after a long preparatory period, set out for vengeance. Marching through the village in the direction of Bircha, the regiment moved very slowly and took its vengeance upon the Ukrainian population. They were afraid to enter the forest and looked for Banderites in closets, pantries, attics, and chicken coops.

Passing through Ukrainian villages for several days and encountering no resistance, the colonel became more daring. Near the village of Bakhova and then Vyatkova he ventured to cross a small wood, first shelling it with mortars. The regiment's achievement was "great." It spent almost a week in UPA territory, a success which could not be claimed by any other enemy unit.

The enemy headquarters in Warsaw was triumphant. The regiment was becoming even braver and entered the Dylehivskyy forest. After going through the entire forest, they stopp-

ed at the edge and sent a scouting party to the houses where Misha's squad was once ambushed. From there one could see the village of Yavirnyk Ruskyy and on the other side a large Hrushivskyy forest. The regiment decided to spend the night here. The next morning it sent a scouting party to Yavirnyk Ruskyy which came across Petya's SB unit. A short exchange of fire and the enemy scouts retreated to the forest. What a paradox. For the first time in UPA's struggle, the enemy felt safer in the forest than in the village.



CHAPTER SIXTEEN

On the other side of Yavirnyk Ruskyy in the Hrushivskyy forest the UPA detachments were very active. Here preparations were being made for the celebration of Heroes Day. Besides the UPA detachments, all SB units as well as sanitary, administrative, and technical units were here too. Many prominent people from the OUN Regional Command were also present.

Captain Lastivka took over the whole battalion and was preparing it for a parade. He placed one rifleman on an ammunition box to symbolize the staff and the straightened battalion passed before him for a dozen or so times. The rifleman's arm began to ache, since he had to keep it raised in salute to the "peak" all this time and he finally got smart. He took his cap off, stood at attention, and kept his arms

pressed to his sides as if to say that now he was a civilian "leader." Loud commands of commander Lastivka carried through the forest "Salute! Look ahead!" and so forth. Bringing the battalion to a halt, he jokingly addressed the men, "You 'bums'! We are not going on a pilgrimage to Mt. Calvary. I'm going to remind you what a drill is. The earth must tremble beneath you." He called out to one man and the latter took three steps forward. Commander Lastivka asked him, "What is a drill?" Fortunately he called on somebody who knew what it was and he began to recite: "A drill is a collection of strictly defined movements, which are performed on command by the whole..." and here he was interrupted by the captain. "Thank you! I see that it is not so bad here," he said with a smile.

Close to a thousand marching soldiers now looked as if the whole battalion were marching on two feet only. "OK," said the commander at dismissal. "Let's hope that you are not going to march worse tomorrow!"

Instructor Zoryan was not so well off. Several weeks spent in preparation of Chumak to recite "Kavkaz" were all for nothing. He gave this recitation over to Vyshnya and now had to struggle with him. He was also rereading his own address several times. Dr. Shuvar was quick-handedly organizing a battalion choir and a working party was building a platform for the staff and the guests of honour. They were driving in flag poles and decorating a field stage. Another group with chaplain Kadylo was dressing the field altar.

On May 24, 1946, around nine o'clock in the morning, erect companies, with well cleaned uniforms, boots, and arms, marched from nearby villages to the place where the celebration was to take place. On this day the cooks also marched with their detachments. The holiday dinner was prepared by the administrative network. Accepting reports by companies, commander Lastivka took charge and led the battalion to the Divine Services. Two companies stood on the left side of the altar, two on the right, and other units and participants took up the back side. The junior company commanded by Lyubko also came. Captain Lyubko was a very bright boy, aged 15, and his soldiers ranged in age from 12 to 16. Anyone reading about this company would think that it was child's play. But it was not so in reality. These boys were very good at gather-

ing information and storing enemy weapons; they were undergoing training and were bound by discipline.

The staff stood near the altar. Upon the command from Com. Lastivka the battalion choir stepped out and was joined by its director, Dr. Shuvar. The flags flew high on the masts and a large nicely decorated portrait of Col. Konovalets hung over the symbolic grave.

In the beginning only the battalion choir was singing, then it was augmented by the ranks of the insurgents. The Credo and the hymn "Bozhe Velykyy" (Great God) came out so majestically that the blood almost stopped in the veins. The sermon which was then delivered by the battalion chaplain could not have been given by any priest who had not lived through this moment. Dinner was served after the Mass, but this time it was cold, consisting of a great deal of meat, sausages, bread, and warm black coffee. Some smart supply officer had put out a sack of onions instead of a salad, but only two companies could make use of the onions, the rest had to be satisfied with the smell.

At about two o'clock in the afternoon the battalion assembled on the road in the forest, several hundred metres from the platform. Around twenty people were standing on the platform: commander Bayda, Father Kadylo, Dr. Shuvar, instructors Evhen and Zoryan, the captains, and the rest of the staff. The company lieutenants were with their companies. Dr. Shuvar excused himself from the platform and went to the spot where the companies were assembling. After speaking to commander Lastivka, he chose twenty singers and with them went up front about a dozen steps from the platform. Dr. Shuvar, who for years had worked in the cultural and educational field, apparently thought that a military parade could not be successful without a band. Therefore he replaced the orchestra with his chorus. At an agreed time, Dr. Shuvar began a lively marching song, "From the Carpathian Mountains comes the echo of freedom," and simultaneously a loud command was heard on the road in the forest. The first rows of marchers approached the left side of the platform. In front, at a distance of about six steps, commander Lastivka was marching. His well built military posture would have provided an ideal model of an officer for a sculptor. Behind him, marking time to the melody sung by the choir, marched Hromenko's company. And behind it the companies

of Burlaka, Lastivka, and Krylach. Behind them Lyubko's junior company tried hard to keep up with the full military step. It was followed by SB units and all other groups. The Red Cross unit, with pretty nurses, presented itself very well. The company was fully armed; even the machine-gunners were carrying their machine-guns on their shoulders.

The parade came off better than planned. It raised the spirits not only of the soldiers and the staff and guests at the platform but also of hundreds of peasant viewers who gave the soldiers tumultuous applause during the parade. After the parade the battalion was commanded to disperse and the men mingled with the civilians.

Then the festive program followed. Instructor Zoryan delivered the opening address and also served as announcer. The address was followed by recitations and the appearance of the battalion choir, all generously applauded by the spectators. The program ended with some lighter numbers, "a revue without laughing," as it was called by rifleman Pavuk, but in reality it was quite the contrary. Here some men imitated the commanders, but the best in this series were the appearances of comrades Bida and Hutsul.

At night the fires burned and the mood in the camp was very cheerful. The staff received new information. The enemy was moving in our direction from Peremyshl. Yesterday they quartered in the village of Yavirnyk Rusky.

Commander Burlaka turned jokingly to commander Bayda. "I think I have to go back to my district. There the mice are running around my house."

Com. Bayda answered with a smile. "Tomorrow we are having a meeting and we'll think of something for the mice."

The company commanders, always carrying a great responsibility on their shoulders, felt much more relaxed in a large company, having with them the colonel who was responsible for everything.

It was deep into the night, and the companies had gone to the villages to spend the night. Only beautiful memories remained of the celebration. Perhaps for some these memories would linger on for years, but now nobody could tell. Petya sent his SBists to scout the area. Hromenko's company left for the nearby village of Huta. After spending the night in villages, the next day the company again camped in the forest near the clearing where yesterday's celebration had been held.

The men from various companies told each other about the military escapades in their areas. The officers met on the side under a branching oak tree.

One could hear shots coming from the direction of Yavirnyk Rusky. In half an hour Petya's squad joined them and reported about conditions in Yavirnyk. Commander Burlaka was speaking at the moment. "If we are not going to wipe the nose of this arrogant colonel, then tomorrow there are going to be as many enemy groups as there were during the deportation action."

"Commander Burlaka," said commander Bayda. "The question is when and where should we receive them."

Commander Hromenko was sitting at one side, drawing the plan of battle. In a moment, he handed it over to his lieutenant, commander Lahidnyy, and he in turn looked it over and nodded his approval.

Then commander Hromenko got up and began to explain his plan.

"The enemy is quartering in the forest overlooking the village of Yavirnyk Rusky. He is probably entrenched. Three of our companies should surround the enemy from the back, very secretly, and one company should go to Yavirnyk and start an attack from there."

"Through a clear field?" He was interrupted by Com. Lastivka.

"Yes, that's just the point," answered Hromenko, "the company advances from an open field and engages the enemy in a fight, but the real attack is made by the three companies from the woods in the back. The circular attack is going to confuse the enemy and his defence will break at some point and then we will have an easier time."

Everybody liked this plan and in half an hour the battalion was on the march. Hromenko's company was going to Yavirnyk. It was to attack from the village. The companies of Burlaka, Lastivka, and Krylach proceeded through the villages of Huta, Yaseniv, and Poruby to the Dylahivskyy forest and then through the forest and close to the enemy positions. The distance was about four kilometres, and the time needed was about two hours. It was now eleven o'clock. The companies in the woods could begin their attack no sooner than 1 P.M.

Below the village of Rybne, Captain Hromenko ordered the

company to halt and called his officers and junior officers to himself.

"Comrades! Our plan is as follows," he began. "We march by the stream as far as the forest to this road," he indicated it on a military map. "We take up positions behind this high furrow, a distance of about four hundred metres from the forest. I shall start the action at exactly 12:45. Bartel's platoon moves first and during the fighting will try to reach the forest and close the ring, making contact with the company of Krylach. Zaliznyak's platoon will close the ring from the west and make contact with Lastivka's company. Chumak's squad will guard the approach from Bircha via Yavirnyk Road. Is it clear to everyone?" Without waiting for an answer, he added, "We are not attacking the forest until the command is given. Are there any questions?"

Here platoon commander Imennyi spoke up. "How strong should the fire be?" he said, having in mind the scarcity of ammunition.

"Until the others attack, it must be strong and the positions of machine-guns should be changed often to confuse the enemy. Are there any more questions? Does everybody understand?"

There was general reply of "Yes," and the company continued on its course.

The company was in high fighting spirits. So far the UPA companies in this area had never raided the enemy forces in the forests. Of course this was a defensive tactic, an ambush or an escape from the surroundings, and the enemy knew it very well. He could have come across an ambush but he never suspected that the UPA detachments could surround him and attack him. Such an attack involves great casualties, which the UPA would not risk, thought the enemy command.

At 12:30 Hromenko's company was already taking up positions along the long and high furrow, so far unnoticed by the enemy. Enemy scouts and observers could be seen at the edge of the forest. They could not see their enemy right in front of them but were viewing the Hrushivskyy forest, a long way from the village, into which Petya's squad had disappeared this morning. In the fields the rye was waist high and the oats and barley were reaching the knees. Between the enemy and the company, two fields were planted with rye, several with oats and barley, and the remainder was left fallow. The

peasants did not have enough cattle left to use up all the grass.

Chumak's squad went to the road and established a good outpost. From there he had a good view in the direction of the village of Lypa and the forest where the "heroic" regiment (which had vowed to take vengeance on the UPA) was now staying.

For the time being an attack from Bircha, as help to the enemy regiment, could be excluded. An ambitious colonel, who was successfully fighting with the "Banderite bands" for the second week now, without firing a shot, would not allow himself to do this. Chumak reasoned that the daring colonel was going to ask for such help in fifteen minutes or so. But at best, should the enemy at Bircha decide to come and help, they could not arrive in less than three hours. Chumak sat down by machine-gunner Smyk and looked through binoculars in the direction of the forest, before which one could see Hromenko's company spread out in fighting positions.

Suddenly a short series from an automatic was fired under the noses of the enemy. It was followed by strong fire from the automatics of each insurgent, with the machine-gunners changing positions after each round. The enemy units, caught off guard by such tactics, were panic stricken. It seemed that UPA detachments were striking with a score or two of machine-guns. The persistent colonel ran around his regiment and urged his soldiers to take up fighting positions.

With every passing moment, the enemy shelling from the forest became thicker but the bullets were falling "into God's windows." During this heavy firing at the edge of the forest, three UPA companies surrounded the enemy. Knowing this forest as well as their own houses, walking like cats and avoiding each dry stick, they turned right and sneaked up to the enemy positions. Not expecting to be surrounded, the enemy did not assume a circular defence but pulled all its forces to the edge of the forest, leaving only several guards in the forest. These guards, seeing the actual fighting for the first time today, were paying more attention to the fighting than to the area they were supposed to watch.

The companies managed to come very close to the enemy, who fired into the air and began to flee. Three companies moved swiftly behind him.

Knowing the exact strength of enemy forces, the UPA

detachments made a swift attack in order to prevent the enemy from assuming his positions, which could have cost the insurgents several dozen casualties in their own ranks.

The brave colonel conducted the fighting 100% in line with the military book. He positioned his soldiers in three rows, one next to the other, as a sign of strong resistance to the Banderites in the event of an attack from the village. The attack from the back was so swift and sudden that the enemy was driven into the pen like a herd of cattle. One group ran out into the field, and Hromenko's company greeted them with bullets. A dozen or so fell to the ground.

The captain commanded,

"Hold fire!" and at the same time addressed the enemy in a raised voice: "Hands up!"

"Hands up!" yelled some insurgent in Polish, the language understood by the enemy. The group raised its hands and went in the direction of the company.

The shots at the edge of the woods were becoming less frequent. The enemy soldiers were running in panic by the hundreds, throwing each other off balance. They were running by the stream, overgrown with thorny blackberry thickets, in the direction of Pyatkova, losing their weapons, hats, and bags in the stream. For weeks the whole battalion could not get over the fact that they had overlooked the need to barricade the deep stream. Had they done so, they could have taken the whole regiment captive. Nevertheless their success was great. Fourteen were captured, 51 were killed, and a great quantity of ammunition and weapons captured. Their casualties included one killed and eleven slightly wounded. Thus ended the vengeance of a daring colonel.

As usual after such a battle, the insurgents talked and joked about it for days, making the most fun of the brave colonel.

"Too bad that we did not take him captive," said rifleman Pavuk to the commander.

"Perhaps it is better so," answered commander Hromenko. "Because if I were that colonel I would rather have died in battle than come back to Peremyshl in rags, without arms and hat, particularly after making such a declaration as his."



CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

The summer of 1946 was warm and fair. This gave the UPA detachments an opportunity to conduct raids very often. Hromenko's company was going for the third time to visit the first district of the Peremyshl region, where Burlaka's company was operating. Almost all detachments of Zakerzonnya conducted raids, some closer to home and others farther away. Some went to Poland, others to Slovakia. Similar raids were undertaken east of the Curzon line. Marching by day through the villages through which the enemy regiment had recently passed, it was possible to find out a great deal from our population about this regiment. Going in the direction of Yavirnyk Rusky they were talking about the end of UPA activity, and returning in defeated groups, they were asking in panic how far it was to the Syan.

The proud Ukrainian peasants of the villages of Ruske, Barkhova, Iskanya, Yasenytsya, and Kupna, greeted their heroes as best they could. Not so long ago they lived through an occupation by the revengeful regiment. Bayda's battalion was stationed in these villages. At present, Hromenko's company was quartered in the village of Kupna. Spending several consecutive days there, the insurgents admired the beauty of the area. This village was surrounded by a dark semi-circle of green coniferous forest. A bit below on the other side extended the broad Syan River. It lost its energies in the descent from the hills near Syanik and here it flowed very slowly and the flat surface of the water was now and then disturbed by some fish. The green willow bushes appeared to be trying to protect and conceal their beauty. Along the narrow path near the river a UPA outpost with a machine-gun was posted. Here at night the insurgents had their "beach" and were tanning themselves by the moonlight, as rifleman Kohut had once said. And rifleman Pavuk added, "and drowning fleas."

The most overt of all was a nightingale somewhere in the tree that continued to sing day and night. Finishing his guard duty, rifleman Kohut maintained that this bird sang for 24 hours a day without stopping.

"Don't be a fool," broke in Pavuk, it's not true."

"I swear to God that it's true," continued Kohut. Today I was on guard duty three times, two hours' each, and he never stopped singing."

"What are you talking about?" joked Pavuk.

"There you have it," continued Kohut. Do you know anything about the flora and fauna?" he asked Pavuk with irony.

These unfamiliar words took Pavuk a bit by surprise but he did not give up.

"Don't be a philosopher and tell me about some cauliflowers. I will prove to you that a bird cannot sing for 24 hours straight."

From now on the guards watched the company and the nightingale.

The result of the "study" of the nightingale was very interesting. The soldiers of Hromenko's company found out that in the month of June the nightingale sang for 23 hours a

day. It stopped singing only between midnight and 1 o'clock in the morning.

Further "studies" of the nightingale were interrupted by the company's moving to the forest. Other companies were already there. The battalion stretched itself into a circular defence position so that in case of attack it would be easy to assume fighting positions, and then camped on the spot. The outposts and guards protected the detachments, and the soldiers of the battalion rested. Some lay in the sun, others lay on soft grass in the shade, looking up at the tall fir trees which seemed to reach the clouds. Others talked with friends from other companies, and still others played chess or read books. Here there were many people from the administrative network of OUN, including commander Hryhor, but only a few people knew what position he held. Everybody treated him with respect. He was an example of a leader-revolutionary.

Misha came up to Chumak and they shook hands smilingly. Chumak was asking Misha how he liked it in the other company and whether or not he was happy.

"What's the difference?" answered Misha. "The enemy is the same and one can always make new friends. But I have other problems. Chumak, I am in love!"

"Which time?" asked Chumak jokingly.

"Don't laugh. I'm serious."

"With whom? With Katrusya?" asked Chumak.

"Yes," said Misha.

Chumak found this rather amusing and he almost asked Misha where he was going to get married, how many guests there would be, where he was going to build a house, and how big a family he was planning, knowing under what conditions they were living now and what might await them tomorrow. But he restrained himself.

"Misha, it's not a sin to be in love, but let's hope that you do not have to get married," cheerfully continued Chumak. This conversation was interrupted by a shot. The men ran to their squads. There was some confusion in the section occupied by Burlaka's company, but it lasted only for a moment and the company took up positions and engaged in a fierce battle. Broken branches were falling from the top. Chumak ran to his squad in leaps. Burlaka's company was already attacking. It was joined by Hromenko's company. The attackers were

not leaping but running fast. The enemy was running in the direction of Bircha, at least it seemed that way, for two companies were running in that direction after somebody. This chase extended for several kilometres. Coming back to their places, the comrades asked what happened. Many of them had not seen anything. Each was explaining it in his own way. Then commander Burlaka began to talk.

"The enemy was going through the forest with the intention of ambushing Hromenko's company in the village of Kupna. Somebody from across the Syan saw them and reported to the enemy. Going peacefully through the forest, they stumbled over our battalion."

Pale-faced, platoon commander Makar joined the group where Com. Burlaka was standing.

"Comrade Commander! Quarter-master Bis has been killed!"

"How? Where?" asked commander Burlaka.

"In the first line. The enemy attacked this section. Bis fired the first series and received a bullet straight in the chest."

Bis was the battalion's quarter-master and at the same time the quarter-master of Burlaka's company. He was an officer of the Ukrainian Division and by some miracle had escaped from Brody. He was not very tall, and rather skinny and wore strong glasses. He was an administrator of the company and took very good care of it. For this reason he became very popular in the detachments and therefore his death was a big blow to all the men and in particular to Com. Burlaka.

- In the battalion headquarters it was decided to bury Bis at one of the better UPÁ cemeteries near Volya Volodzhska. His body was tied to a horse's saddle and the battalion set out for Volya Volodzhska, about 30 kilometres away. Marching through the villages in a single file the battalion stretched out for about three kilometres. A scouting party went in front and behind it a rifleman led Com. Burlaka's horse, which carried the body of Quarter-master Bis. Father Kadylo walked behind the body, then the battalion staff, followed by an extremely long file of insurgents. Marching for more than ten hours, the battalion halted for a rest. After sleeping for several hours, the funeral procession was again ready to start on the road to the cemetery, only five kilometres away. Now the body was placed on a stretcher, the battalion drew itself three abreast, and the funeral detachment was ready to

march farther. Eight comrades-in-arms carried the body of Quarter-master Bis and behind them was Father Kadylo, the staff, the battalion choir, and then the battalion, three abreast.

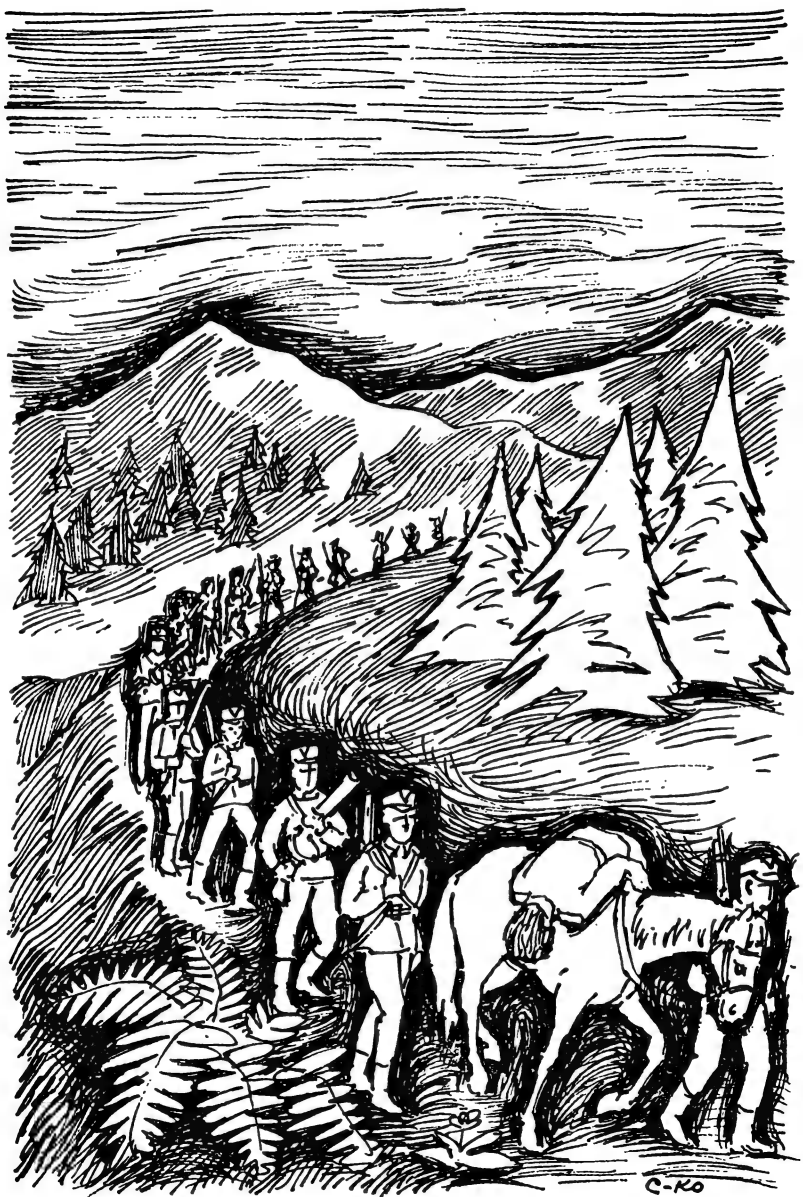
The choir sang funeral hymns singing "Vichnaya Pamyat" most often. Now the funeral detachment moved very slowly, and "Vichnaya Pamyat" came out louder and louder. Although the deceased had been a humble man, he had won great respect for himself among all for his tireless work for the comrades.

The funeral procession approached the UPA cemetery on top of a mountain. The men who had left the battalion early this morning had the grave all ready. Father Kadylo said the requiem, the choir sang, and an honour guard stood by the body. Nearby a birch cross stood with an inscription: "Battalion Quarter-master Bis." There were several rows of similar crosses here. And how many graves were there without crosses, buried somewhere by the enemy?

Chumak now recalled Colonel Konyk, Orskyy, and others. He looked at the crosses in other rows, and began to read the signs: Platoon Commander Chayka, Junior Officer Yaryy, Rifleman Voron. The signs were so small, it was hard to decipher the names. Again he glanced at the inscription on the new cross: "Battalion Quarter-master Bis..." Who was 'this honest, idealistic hero of the Ukrainian people, this quarter-master Bis? In one of his conversations with Chumak, Bis had told him that he was related to Father Kapustyan-sky, and this was all that Chumak knew about him.

How will the future historian decipher this history? Are the buried archives and coded registers of these insurgents going to be preserved? These thoughts were interrupted by honorary salvoes fired from rifles as the body, strewn over with flowers, was being covered by clods of earth by the men.

After the funeral all companies spent the night in the fourth district and then started back to the first. This time they stayed for several days in the villages of Molodovychi, Krasivtsi, Konyushna, Asmanovychi and Kurmanychi. Some insurgents from Hromenko's company were natives of these villages and now they had a chance to see their parents and friends. After having a good time in the first district, Hromenko's company was supposed to leave for its own district in the evening, but it was stopped by Com. Bayda because of a special assignment for the whole battalion.



On the other side of Peremyshl, near Zhuravytsya, lay several Ukrainian villages. There the population was nationally conscious and maintained good contacts with UPA detachments. There were no armed units, only the OUN network and various contacts between the West and the UPA.

General Swierczewsky was planning a complete annihilation of Ukrainians in Zakerzonnya and whenever he could find a village or a settlement inhabited by Ukrainians he liquidated it. This fate met the villages of Kovychi, Vuykovychi, Malkovychi, Batychi, Orikhivtsi, and Dynkovychi. Deporting all Ukrainians from these villages in two days, the enemy planned to settle them with its own colonists. The UPA could not allow this idea to materialize without punishment, so it was decided to burn the villages before the new settlers arrived.

Receiving good information, and after considerable planning and preparation, the battalion was on its way. Crossing the Syan near the village of Slyvytsya, the battalion walked between Polish villages and into a small forest. The men should have approached the place of the burning in strict conspiracy, which was rather hard to maintain in this region. Crossing the small wood, and then the fields near the villages of Vapivtsi and Bovyno, and marching rather quickly the detachment reached the forest near the village of Matskovychi almost at dawn. Here it camped for the day. The forest was not large, and outposts and guards were stationed at the edge of the woods. The men were in good spirits and the prospective task seemed more like an outing than a dangerous action. The insurgents were joking about the fact that only comrades Buryy, Zelenyy, and Zenko should have been sent on this mission, since they were natives of these villages, and had to burn their own roofs. For conspiratorial reasons the following command was issued: "If somebody from the nearby Polish villages strolls into the forest, hold him until evening and then set him free."

Near the forest, an old Russian tractor was roaring through a kolkhoz field. It was making so much noise that it seemed to be running on one cylinder and a stream of black smoke concealed it from the eyes of the insurgents. The tractor was ploughing the land which had already been ploughed last year but which was now overgrown with grass.

"It's interesting to see if they are going to plant something this year," laughed the insurgents.

"I wonder if they are going to get an order from Warsaw," added Zaporozhets, "Moreover, an order can come too late and they will have to plough it all over again next year. I had to plough the land in Zaporizhya four times, year after year. This is modern socialism and nothing can be done about it. The party has to think for them, and there's nothing to worry about," ended Zaporozhets with a smile.

Under an ash tree, twisted by the winds, sat about twenty insurgents breakfasting on black bread and meat and washing it down with black coffee, which had been captured from the "brave" regiment. The tractor, which at this time stopped puffing, was the cause of this discussion.

"All right," remarked Burkun, "and what social order should we have in Free Ukraine?"

"Anything but socialist," said Zhurba.

"Why not?" asked Burkun and added, "Don't confuse socialism with Russian Communism."

"But I'm against a socialist order and large land holdings," said SB member Terka.

Chumak interrupted him. "Friends! Don't you see that the communist-socialist idea has proved to be bankrupt in a quarter of a century? The people are hungry, barefooted, and without American help the Russian Empire would be lying flat on its back. The feudal order is also impossible in Ukraine for neither the Russian tsar nor the Polish king is going to give the Ukrainian land to anybody. I am for private ownership. The land would have to be bought from the government. It will be taxed and if a given landowner will not be able to work it at a profit, he will be forced to sell it, just like a merchant his store or a craftsman his shop. Private ownership gives man initiative and an inducement to work. All work like ants and the state has more millions of working hours. When the state collects good taxes on private incomes it can use the money to establish a good social order." Chumak was speaking as enthusiastically as if he were addressing a campaign rally of some political party.

"All right," again interrupted Zaporozhets, "but what political order are we going to have?"

"Brother! We have enough politicians," joked Pavuk.

"Comrade Pavuk! You're not all there," added Zhurba with

a smile and continued, "I'm against democracy. With our people it won't work without a hard hand."

Here the majority did not agree with Zhurba.

"Why won't it work?" insisted Burkun. "Democracy does not have to be a decaying force and strong laws passed by our government are going to be more effective than some 'jerk's' dictatorship without a mandate from the people."

"I don't mean our democracy during our liberation struggle under the leadership of Moscow's puppet, Vynnychenko," he continued stubbornly. "If Petlyura and Konovalets would have liquidated Vynnychenko, we would have had a Free Ukraine today."

He was interrupted by Zhurba. "Oh, brother, are you mixed up. You're speaking about democracy and proposing the liquidation of elected Vynnychenko."

"Elected by whom?" firmly maintained Burkun. "Imagine Petlyura, Konovalets, and with them Mikhnovskyy with his ideas. In the general elections they surely would have been supported by the nation as a whole."

"All right. We have condemned Communism. But can a Communist be a good Ukrainian?" asked someone else.

"Oh you funny 'Galiciamen.' You have absolutely no idea about the recent twenty years of our lives under 'the bright sun,' (Stalin) said Burkun further. "We are not afraid of Communists. In fact there are very few of them, and even if they are there it's because of the 'spoils.' If we could hold really free elections, there would be no more than 5% of them. But that 5% of 'Janissaries' which are serving Moscow and taking vengeance upon the population are very dangerous indeed."

"But can a Communist be a Ukrainian patriot?" scornfully asked Zhurba. "And how many of the former Communists are with UPA today," maintained Zaporozhets, "and even holding high positions? It is true that there the people have lost all hope of liberation by their own forces, but this job has to be done by us, UPA members." Saying this Zaporozhets proudly pointed to his own chest.

Chumak was listening to all this and was very happy. These people have been educated and can think. It was a good thing that Konovalets did not organize a political party but instead the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists, whose task was to establish a Ukrainian state.

In the evening the tractor again began to make noise for several minutes. Buryy, Zelenyy, Kozel, and Zenko were called to the battalion headquarters and told they were to serve as contacts men.

At night the battalion was gathered together and each company and some platoons received instructions about the place of the action. The time in which the action was to begin was given and, after its completion, the place of assembly. It was explained that in case these villages were already settled by the Poles, they must order them out, give them time to move, and then set fire to the houses. Commander Bayda once more reminded the men to act in a way appropriate for a good Ukrainian insurgent. In case of enemy presence and strong resistance, the enemy should be driven away by fighting and the action should be continued.



CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

It was already quite dark when the battalion started by companies for the assigned places. Zaliznyak's platoon, which now numbered 56 and looked more like a company than a platoon, was to begin the action at some settlement between the village of Dynkovychi and the town of Zhuravytsi, in which a large enemy garrison was stationed in army barracks.

Contacts man Kozel was leading the platoon to its destination and they marched over country roads. The night was dark and one could tell by Kozel's behaviour that he was not sure of the direction. A military map was of no use here, because neither the rye fields nor the narrow furrows would be marked on it. To the right at a distance of several kilometres one could see the glow of well lighted Peremyshl, which in the last few years had lived through several occupa-

tions and each occupier claimed that the city "rightfully" belonged to them. One could hear steam engines and the whistles of locomotives somewhere very near. The villages along which the platoon was passing were not lit at all. Their inhabitants had been deported and scattered around the territories of the former Germany, which after the war had been annexed by Communist Poland.

Only five minutes remained before the beginning of the action. Contacts man Kozel was speeding up his walk and leading the platoon first to the left and then to the right. It soon became clear that he was lost. The time in which the action was scheduled to begin had come, but no settlement was in sight. Some lights could be seen among the trees a bit to the right.

"Run!" commanded the platoon leader. In a few seconds the surprised platoon found itself under some high walls. Contacts man Kozel recognized these walls as military barracks in the town of Zhuravytsi. The platoon retreated a hundred steps and debated what to do. The entire battalion was waiting for the action to begin and the platoon was three kilometres away from its destination.

"Hit the barracks," proposed Chumak and the machine-gunners began to put their guns in position.

The platoon commander gave the order:

"Fire!"

Smyk hung his machine-gun over his shoulder and was shelling the walls, standing up. Shooting at the barracks for five minutes or so, the platoon left in the direction where the villages were already burning.

Panic set in at the barracks. Rockets were flying into the air and thousands of bullets were flying into the darkness.

The platoon joined its company in the midst of burning houses. Here there was neither an alien population nor enemy troops. Burning one village, the company moved on to the village of Matskovychi and began to set fire to the roofs. Contacts man Kozel ran ahead. He reached his empty house and stopped in the yard, out of breath. The windows were broken, the doors ajar, and a broken three-legged table was lying outside.

Kozel ran to the barn, a dozen or so steps from the house. The stable and the barn were under one roof, and a bit to the side among birches was a cellar made of stone. It was half

outside and half in the ground. He ran out of the stable and into the barn but could find no one, only emptiness and ruin. At the corner of the barn he stopped and began to think. Many pictures passed before his eyes: his mother drying her tears with her apron; his strong-willed father who told the mother "Stop, old woman"; his brother and sister-in-law who also lived in this house; his younger sister, home for vacation from a gymnasium in Yaroslav; he himself, while harnessing horses to a plough in the spring; and thousands of other memories.

Shots could be heard from nearby Polish villages and in Zhuravytsya, but Kozel was oblivious to all this; his head was spinning and he was almost in a daze. He placed one foot on the board from the cut-up block under the barn and began to smoke a cigarette. Lighting it, he held the match to the roof without thinking. Straw after straw began to catch fire and Kozel's barn was soon burning, the fire becoming so strong that he had to get away from it. Suddenly Kozel came to his senses. Unable to set fire to the roof of the house, since it was covered by tin-plates, he went inside, piled all the furniture in a heap, placed a mattress beneath it, and set the mass on fire. Then he ran to a neighbouring house and set fire to it as well.

Rifleman Zenko approached Chumak.

"Comrade commander! Have you seen rifleman Kozel?"

"No? Why?" asked Chumak.

"He was born in this village and I would like to see him."

"And where is his house?" asked Chumak.

"In the middle of the village," answered Zenko.

"Then let's go there," said Chumak, and both of them started running. Perhaps no one else could understand comrades Kozel and Zenko as well as Chumak, for he had lived through a similar occurrence in his own village and would not forget it as long as he lived.

Passing a dozen houses, both insurgents stopped near several burning buildings. Near the cellar stood comrade Kozel. He turned to the approaching friends and forcing himself to smile said, "You know, I just burned my father's and my uncle's house," and turned his face away from his friends as if he wanted to hide something. But the strong light from the burning house gave him away and revealed that an old partisan also has room for tears. Chumak wanted to put an

end to these emotions and said, "Comrades, let's join our unit."

"There is another house here. It is not far away," said Kozel, and all three quickly started for it. After passing several houses, Kozel said, "Here it is" and started to set fire to the roof. The house was consumed by flames while the men stood under some trees and watched. Kozel began to reminisce. "Look," he said, "from these lilac bushes I broke off clusters of flowers and brought to her, and she never realized that these flowers came from her own garden."

"And where is she now?" asked Chumak.

"I don't know. The last time I saw her was in Dyniv in 1943."

"In Dyniv?" asked Chumak with surprise. "What was her name?"

"Hanusya!" answered Kozel.

"Wasn't she a secretary in the cooperative?" asked Chumak.

"Yes," replied Kozel, "but how do you know?"

"Comrade Kozel, I know her very well. I even had a chance to dance with her, and you can be proud of her. No doubt she emigrated with Director Dzyubynovskyy."

The remainder of the company had already passed the burning house of Kozel and now they all went farther on together. Marching down the road, somebody was saying that so far only two settlers had come down here to live.

The company was nearing the edge of the village intending to go to the rallying point, when here on the road something began to run toward the company, with the earth trembling beneath it. One could hear the neighing of a horse and it seemed that the enemy cavalry was speeding along. The insurgents clasped their weapons, ready to meet this horror.

From among the burning houses ran out a large, black, thoroughbred horse. With luxurious mane, thick curved neck, he looked like a race horse, only a bit too fat for that function. Being frightened by the burning houses he stood on his hind legs and neighed loudly. Well rested and fed, this ogre seemed like a very dangerous horse. He was dragging a long, thick rope behind him and time and again raised himself on his hind legs and neighed like mad. Noticing the long rope, Chumak leaped for it and began to hang on. The horse, noticing that someone wanted to stop him, began to kick with his hind legs and run. At that moment, three insurgents

were already holding on to the rope but the horse pulled them behind him like sparrows. Entering a nearby enclosure, the horse stopped. Three more insurgents ran up to the rope and a wrestling match between them and the horse began. Contesting for a quarter of an hour, both sides became weaker and were perspiring. Perhaps for the first time in his life, white foam appeared on the horse's smooth and beautiful coat. After several such attempts the horse gave up and calmed down to such an extent that Chumak rode it to the gathering point. Going up hill an almost quiet horse suddenly balked and lifted his front legs so high that he lost his balance and toppled to the ground with Chumak, severely crushing the latter's leg.

Chumak had had occasion more than once to struggle with his father's well fed horses, particularly in the spring, but this devil was worse than any of them. Stroking the horse on the neck to pacify him, Chumak held him by the rope, but Buk led him on another one, just in case.

At the rallying point this horse proved to be a great attraction. Commander Burlaka said, "Too bad that he has not been castrated, he would have made a good riding horse then."

The alerted enemy in Peremyshl, Zhuravytsya, Dubetsk, and Dyniv was sending out patrols in armoured cars along the Peremyshl-Syanik highway. The battalion camped in a small forest not far from the road and the burned villages. It was necessary to spend the day here in great secrecy, for no one wanted to get in the way of artillery fire or to engage in battle with the enemy in a disadvantageous location. But the diabolical horse was neighing like crazy.

Captain Hromenko approached Chumak's squad and said in a harsher voice than usual, "Chumak! Do you realize what the consequences could be because of your horse? You must silence him."

This was the first order which Chumak did not know how to carry out.

A considerable number of the insurgents were listening to this conversation and each was thinking of the best way to carry out this order. Some suggested wrapping rags around a pistol to muffle the sound to shoot the horse. Others said that a horse could easily be killed by hitting him with a stick between the ears. But Chumak wanted to keep the

horse alive. At the time when all were knocking their brains out as to what to do with the animal, Buk and Kohut were tying his upper lip with a strong, thin string and the horse did not utter another sound until the evening. At night the battalion crossed the Syan into its own "republic" and with it a nice blwack horse with a swollen lip.

On the second evening a Polish newspaper from Peremyshl reached the detachment. On the first page the editors asked the Ministry of Defence:

- 1) When will the UPA bands be finished off at last?
- 2) How is our reconnaissance working when thousands of Banderites are roaming through our territories unnoticed?
- 3) How secure is the Polish population when the military barracks themselves are being attacked?

The insurgents had a good laugh while reading about these problems of the men, in particular about the accidental attack on military barracks, which in any event made good publicity for UPA detachments.

In the village of Vilshany, the captains reported their departure to the battalion commander and each company left for its own district. Going through its area Hromenko's company was quartered for several days in the villages of Berezka and Pyatkova, and was now stationed in Kotiv.

- Iber, Chumak's black horse, after climbing a dozen pre-Carpathian hills and going through hundreds of various paths, was now as quiet as a child. But when he met his mates he became impossible. Commander Hromenko tried to ride him several times and said to Chumak once, "You know, he is a good riding horse."

Chumak knew what he was driving at and joked, "How much are you going to give?"

This joke was quite a good one, for not one soldier carried even a cent, except the quarter-master. There was no need for it.

Without waiting for Com. Hromenko's bid, Chumak said, "I'm giving him to you."

"Thank you, comrade Chumak. I will pay you after the war," said the commander.

The horse was led away by rifleman Perets, who muttered at departure, "Did you have to bring that devil here?"

In the evening the company was leaving for the village of

Dobro, and Chumak's squad was sent to the village of Kuzmyna to bring back a head or two of cattle. For quite some time Chumak's squad had not been sent anywhere, while some squads left every day to perform all sorts of dangerous tasks, even engaging in fights at times.

The way to Kuzmyna lay through their own safe territory. From the time of the action the enemy troops did not quarter in Kuzmyna and the local bandits also went with them. At present Polish peasants were living here.

Chumak's squad entered the village quietly and began to ask if there was a mayor here who could assign two heads of cattle for the soldiers. The peasants answered that there was none. Checking the stable of one farmer, Chumak convinced himself that on this once rich farm there were only two cows and one small calf. The owner, a Pole, was not afraid of the insurgents, since he had no reason to fear them. Now Chumak struck up a conversation with him. The farmer took out a large pouch of tobacco and gave it to the riflemen and then took a bottle of Polish brandy from the closet "Zubrivka," and offered it to the men.

"Thank you very much," said Chumak, "but we cannot drink while on duty." Seeing Kohut's bag, which was half open, the farmer hid the bottle there. Kohut, with his eyes, was asking Chumak what to do and Chumak answered him by a short "Thank you," in the direction of the host. The farmer did not try to speak Ukrainian, as did hypocritical Poles, but felt completely free, and it was a pleasure to talk to him. If Poland had many such people, our relations with them as neighbours would look quite different, thought Chumak.

"All right," said Chumak to the farmer "I am considering you a mayor today and you allot me two head of cattle."

"Aren't you going to take mine?" asked the farmer in surprise.

"If we don't find them anywhere else, we'll take yours," said Chumak.

"Good, I'll tell you where you can find them but please visit more houses so that the man won't know who sent you to him."

"O.K.," said Chumak without knowing why this farmer was so afraid of the "character."

"The man in the sixth house from here," said the farmer,

"has a lot of cattle, but he does not keep them in his own stable. His stable is very small and he keeps the cattle in the neighbouring stable which belongs to a Ukrainian who has been deported."

Thanking the farmer, the squad went from house to house and convinced itself that there were plenty of cattle here. Coming to the house of the said "character," they found that he was not at home. It seemed that he had fled. Upon being asked if they could take two heads of cattle, his wife opened the door to a tiny stable, built as an extension to the house, and said provocatively, "Go ahead!"

The stable, where in the past perhaps two goats had been kept, was empty.

"Don't you have any more cattle?"

"No," said the woman.

"And where is your husband?"

"I don't know," was the answer.

The squad left the woman and the shabby house and went to the neighbouring homestead. Here the house and the hallway were jammed with hay and grain and in the stable were eight heads of cattle. One was so nice and plump that it seemed to have a ton of meat on it.

"Take six heads," ordered Chumak, "and do not forget that plump one." It was long after midnight, but they had a long way to go. Moreover, the woman ran out and objected to their taking the cattle.

"But you said that we can take them, and what's more these are not your cattle; they belong to the deported Ukrainians." It was necessary to threaten her with shooting to get the stubborn woman to go back into the house.

The march with cattle proceeded very slowly and the most trouble was caused by the plump cow. She had to be pushed and dragged, but she took her time and did not want to go. An hour and a half had passed and the squad had not moved ahead more than a kilometre. There were proposals to leave the plump one behind, but persistent and a bit stubborn by nature, Chumak would not even hear of it. Thus they crawled step by step until they were overtaken by the sun at the settlement of Lyakhova, two kilometres from Kuzmyna. Rifleman Buk taking a good look at the cattle began to laugh heartily.

"Why are you laughing?" asked Chumak.

"Can't you see that the plump one is going to have a calf in a day or two?"

Suddenly enemy shelling was heard in Kuzmyna. The Pole, who at present was the owner of these cattle which belonged to Ukrainian peasants, saw the insurgents in the village, climbed on a horse and went to Bircha to notify the enemy. The latter, finding out that there was only a small UPA unit in the village, set out for Kuzmyna with two companies. Now the enemy fire was heard more often and much closer. It would take six hours of marching to reach the company. A small wooded area lay in front of the squad, and their position now was both disadvantageous and dangerous. "Tie the cattle in the barn; take only two heads along and continue to march," ordered the squad leader.

Entering the woods, where one could almost see from one end to the other, they began to plan their defence and, in case of a strong attack, a retreat. Now Chumak regretted the fact that he had not taken only two good heads of cattle, for by now he would have been back with the company. As it was, they might have several casualties because of the pregnant cow and his own stupidity.

The enemy was already shelling the forest and had come close to the houses. The Polish troops were already taking the four heads of cattle and now they were going to have trouble with that plump one. The last two, tied in the forest, were bellowing at full blast.

Here one had to think and make a decision fast. To leave the forest through an open field in order to join the company would be suicide and a defence by thirteen soldiers against two companies did not look any more promising. The riflemen looked at Chumak and waited for his orders. He did not show his confusion but so far, he did not have an answer. The noisy cattle were giving away the location of the squad, and the enemy, shelling the forest from machine-guns so strongly that the leaves fell from trees, moved toward the forest. There was nothing else to do but to fight and Chumak called out loud and clear, "Fire!"

The insurgents were lying behind thick trees and by accurate fire forced the enemy to retreat behind the houses. Suddenly Chumak got a bright idea. Most likely the enemy was not aware of the fact that the whole company was not camping in this forest, therefore we had to prove to him that

there were a lot of troops here. It was not necessary to invent something, merely to review the last few battles.

"Smyk! Run along the edge of the forest and fire a round from the machine-gun from time to time to make it look as if there are a number of machine-guns here."

Smyk did not need further instructions. Soon, machine-gun fire was heard here and there. In one place there was a small stream overgrown with shrubs which reached almost to the house. Machine-gunner Smyk jumped into the stream, sneaked in near the house and began to shoot. This looked like an attack and the enemy began to retreat.

Then the shooting stopped. The sun and the clock seemed to move so very slowly. It was still long before lunchtime, and what about the evening?

"I wonder if enemy reinforcements are going to come from Bircha?" asked Voron. All thirteen men were thinking the same thing.

At last it was three o'clock in the afternoon, and the men became more cheerful. Now rifleman Kohut was saying that he could defend this forest by himself until evening and not let the enemy in.

"Yeah, only give him a twisted rifle and change his wet underwear!" added Pavuk.

After sunset the cheerful squad marched to the company with two heads of cattle. They joined the detachments around midnight and Chumak was reporting their arrival to the company commander on the next morning. Listening to the report, Com. Hromenko laughed loudly and asked, "Chumak, do you come from a well-to-do family by any chance?"



CHAPTER NINETEEN

The second summer of postwar struggle with the enemy in the Zakerzonnya region was passing. The company's morale was extremely high. The enemy battalions appeared in the company's district more often but it was enough to send a squad or a platoon to greet them, and after a small skirmish the enemy retreated behind the walls of Bircha or Dyniv but wrote in their reports: "Hundreds of UPA bands have been destroyed."

So as not to keep the detachment idle, somebody got the idea to go boar hunting. Here the "old poachers" had their field day. The company staff listened to the planning of the action. The main part was played by one of the oldest UPA members in Hromenko's company, Rubakha, and rifleman

Makar. It was true that Rubakha was very courageous in battle but Makar had not exhibited this trait.

The company divided itself into two groups, one lying in wait, the other chasing the "enemy."

It was not certain how many boars there had been in this forest in the past, but at present the fields near the woods were so rooted up that a hundred horses with ploughs could not have done better.

Makar set a trap near a stream, which was surrounded by a swamp. On the other side one could hear the cries of the drivers. The men making up the ambush were standing quietly. A great part of these men had never gone hunting and this whole operation looked rather strange to them. Rifleman Makar looked even funnier. He knelt behind a stout tree and aimed at something all the time, but there was nothing up front. The soldiers looked at him and said jokingly,

"He is even afraid of a boar."

Makar raised his finger to his mouth and silenced the men with a quiet "pst . . . pst." Suddenly a terrible noise was heard up front. The branches were broken and a wild roaring of animals was carried in the direction of the company making the ambush. The range of vision between the thickets and the ambush was very small. Nine boars rushed at the company with such speed that within a few seconds they had run through it and disappeared into the forest. Makar alone fired two shots and killed one boar in front of the company and another one behind. All those daredevils who only a minute ago had been making fun of Makar were now perched safely in the trees, while a few were still climbing up them in panic. Makar, who would rather fight boars than men, now became very popular and the whole company talked about him. One boar weighed over 600 pounds, but the meat was not very good. It smelled of the wilderness or, as Makar said, "of the wind." Makar claimed that it should be marinated and in several weeks it would taste good. But the company cooks were of another opinion and nobody bothered to marinate the meat. Makar took out the boar's large tusks, cleaned them, and kept them as souvenirs.

Commanders Hromenko, Lahidnyy, and Sokolenko were planning something, perhaps an action against an enemy base at Shlyakhetska Dobra. Instructor Zoryan was "feeding" ideas to soldiers. In the last few days he gave a short review of the

history of UVO, OUN, UHVR, ABN, the congresses and resolutions. He went over ideological and program documents and in the end made a political survey. During the intermission, Zoryan spoke about the struggle of UPA detachments in the Kolomyia, Stanislaviv, Stryi, Drohobych, and Lviv regions. The men "showered" him with questions.

Now Commandant Petya was speaking. Winking slightly at Zubchenko and Chumak, he then turned to Zoryan with a question, which in reality was more like a commentary: "Comrade Zoryan! Why do you waste time on lectures? Can't you see that the men are fully aware of our situation. Each of them knows what the situation is and what our fate is. You can see that we have no desertion and that each is staunchly fighting for the honour of his nation in order to prove to our enemies and to the whole world that we are fighting for the right to lead a free life in our own state."

Petya continued with rising enthusiasm. "I think it would be better to print our revolutionary literature and to disseminate it in large quantities in towns and localities which are not abundant in forests and where UPA detachments have no possibility to be active."

Instructor Zoryan was very pleased, for he saw that this struggle was educating a new Ukrainian man, a man with a spine and a vision of the future. He saw that ideas which were so proudly propagated by these soldiers were much stronger than those of cruel Moscow with its bloodthirsty dictators. And although almost the entire world was now collaborating with Moscow, the insurgents were sure that only the concepts of UPA, the ideas of Ukrainian nationalism, together with the subjugated nations, would change the order in Eastern Europe, so that freedom of nations and individuals would reign in free states, on rich lands and old cultures.

In the meantime, the enemy battalion had wedged itself into the village of Shlyakhotska Dobra and began to entrench itself there. The village of Shlyakhotska Dobra was situated on a broad plain near the Syan River. On the other side stretched a large forest in a semi-circle. The Ukrainian peasants were relatively well-to-do and sincere. Prior to the war the population here had been divided into noblemen and commoners, as was told by Rifleman Kanya from the neighbouring village of Ulyuch. Even in church, often barefooted, these noblemen stood separately on one side and never

mingled with the commoners. This custom of the former high-spirited nobles now became something to ridicule, for now the people were nationally conscious and dedicated.

The enemy had entrenched itself in a semi-circle. The trenches extended from the Syan, around the village, and again to the Syan. Behind the enemy was the river and the ford, so that in the event of a large-scale attack it could retreat across the Syan. The enemy's defence system was so good that to capture it would entail a large number of casualties. Nevertheless the UPA detachments could not allow the enemy to build its base here. The company's scouts continuously watched the enemy positions from the forest, and from time to time Com. Hromenko himself went to the edge of the forest and looked through a telescope and then at the map. It was clear that he was planning something, but it was not certain when, how, and with how many men. Because sometimes they had to delay an action for two weeks or even longer, because of the bright moon which often served the enemy. At present the moon rose around midnight, and this pleased the enemy for it illuminated the foreground for at least half of the night, thus lessening the chances of a guerrilla attack.

Hromenko wanted to take advantage of this opportunity. It was not far to the field of action and by beginning the action earlier in the evening it was possible to finish it by midnight. On the next day special orders were issued after dinner.

"This evening — action. Leave behind all ringing and shining things." The rallying point and the password were given and the commander added once more, "Today the company's approach to the place of action must be quieter than the walk of mice. When we go through the water not even the fish should hear us."

The plan of action was already clear to some soldiers and it appeared to be very sensible, for with good concealment it was possible to come into the middle of the enemy positions, but in case of failure, it would be necessary to retreat across the Syan and into enemy territory. This would be similar to a Polish company's retreat to Slovakia, through which it could reach its base, while running away from Khrin's company. One thing was certain, that the order to be extra careful would be carried out. The very idea that only one company was going to launch an attack upon such large

enemy forces which, moreover, were entrenched, made one shiver. Commander Hromenko's courage and bravery could only be admired. Often his fellow-insurgents and peasants said that Commander Hromenko was lucky. In reality it wasn't luck, but his military knowledge and aptitude. When it came to the life of his soldiers, he prized it very highly and often warned them before an action.

"Use all means of protection and cover; destroy the enemy and come back alive."

In the early evening the company was already at the edge of the village of Ulyuch. From there it was only a few kilometres to the place of the action. The whole company assembled among three houses. It was not known how much the captain feared for his comrades-in-arms and for himself, for probably there was not one soldier in the world who would not be afraid of battle, to a greater or lesser degree. But the captain was joking, he told his men to take time off for a cigarette and then they would go.

"Boys," the captain turned to his men, "today we are crawling on hands and knees and in one spot we have to come within ten steps of the enemy machine-gun without being noticed."

The evening was very dark, and the company was marching along the banks of the Syan River. A local UPA member, who had skipped through these banks since childhood served as the contacts man. The river in this place was very deep. "When you hear noisy water," the contacts man was explaining, "the river is shallow and you can walk through it. The water is noisy where the stream from Dobra enters, and that is where the enemy defences begin and the bank on that spot is two metres high. After crossing the tributary, we are going to be in the midst of the enemy defences."

The first squad of Imenny's platoon had to take up defence positions in the direction of the village, about twenty or thirty steps beyond the tributary. Going some distance, the detachment began to proceed between the river and the bank, which at times was very steep, covered with sand and stones. At last they could hear the roaring of the water. It must be close to the enemy's defensive ring and it would have been interesting to know what the crew of the enemy machine-gun, only several steps away, were thinking at this moment.

The company moved very slowly. Each man was lightly

feeling the ground under his feet before taking a step. Half the company was inside the enemy's defence circle and, assuming positions in the direction of the village, waited for the remainder of the company. Here the soldiers were helped by the noise of the water in the Syan. At present the detachment occupied positions at the edge of the enemy defence encirclement and almost closed it. The detachment then began to move quietly and carefully in the direction of the village. In the back one could hear the murmur of the water; on both sides and at the front the enemy was guarding the forefield without realizing that in a few minutes an attack would be launched against it from the unprotected side. Now the detachment moved through a pasture and a field, where the uncut oats reached as high as the chest.

It was still about 200 steps to the village. No military unit in the world would have liked to find itself in such surroundings, and here an UPA company with great effort had thrust itself into the middle of a huge and hostile horseshoe. What if the whole circular enemy defence would turn its weapons toward the middle? This would prove unsuccessful, however, since the enemy was entrenched behind the houses while the UPA company was already close to the houses.

Lights flickered here and there in the village. Phosphorous hands on the watches showed ten after ten.

Suddenly a rifle shot fired by the enemy guard was heard. Now the detachments, opening fire, reached the first houses. • The enemy was completely confused as to the direction of the attack and began shelling the woods. Even those units which were quartered in the village ran to their posts. The company was already in the village. Here was an enemy camp, wagons loaded with ammunition and other military hardware. In an instant the company began shelling the enemy. The battle lasted no more than half an hour, and the enemy fled in panic to the village of Ulyuch and in the direction of the Syan. Some managed to find the ford, others ended up in deep waters. Thus another enemy base was liquidated and a great deal of military equipment was captured.

There were no casualties on the part of the company. How easily and simply this whole operation had been conducted, and yet how complicated it had looked yesterday, seeing dozens of enemy machine-gun nests from the forest.

What were the enemy and its command thinking now, with

the whole battalion fled from the field of battle, leaving behind weapons and other military hardware.

All of Poland was now talking about fierce battles with the Banderite UPA bands. The enemy now mentioned UPA more often, but changed the word "insurgent" to "partisan." (guerrilla).

To combat the UPA, Poland received several planes from Stalin and began to drop hundreds of bombs, the size of grenades, into the forests. With each passing day the enemy command made greater preparations for combating UPA detachments and also put greater pressure on the Polish underground organization AK. Looking for help and advice, the AK representatives began to contact the UPA command more frequently. Seeing the hardened, well trained insurgents, they held them up as examples to their own members.

There could be no talk of completely liquidating the UPA detachments. The enemy himself did not believe it possible, and what was more, the UPA continued to be on the offensive.

Warnings to the enemy not to attack the Ukrainian villages on this side of the Syan were of no avail, and the UPA detachments were often forced to attack the enemy bases across the Syan.



CHAPTER TWENTY

A light, warm breeze bent the tops of trees in the Porubsky forest, and a little below, between the village of Poruby and the forest, a rye field ripened. The wind bent it in large waves in a westerly direction. At the same time these waves transformed the field of rye from light green to dark green, as if someone were painting it with a huge brush.

In the forest, insurgent life was at the peak of its activity. As usual in the headquarters the pencils were working hard, while in the midst of trees squads were conducting military exercises. The subject of today's training session was hand-to-hand fighting and fighting in towns. Squad leader Voron, who had just returned from the second graduating class of junior officers' school, was also using Judo in his exercises.

The method of training was very interesting and several nearby squads joined him.

The area was quiet. A dozen or so columns of smoke were rising above the trees and from time to time were snatched by the wind and carried somewhere west. The squad cooks were warming up dinner.

The patrols, which stood at the edge of the forest, had a wide range of vision. In front of them, beyond a two-kilometer stretch of lowland, stretched the Syan River, and across it on the highway, larger enemy formations could be seen. The peaceful village of Volodzh lay on this side of the river to the left, while several kilometers to the right, a relatively large unit of enemy troops was crossing the river into the village of Selyska. Two companies of that unit mustered enough courage to come to the edge of the village of Poruby, about two kilometers from Selyska.

After listening to the report of one of the sentinels, Com. Hromenko looked around the forest and called Chumak to him.

"Comrade Chumak," he began, "two companies of Polish troops are advancing toward Poruby. Cut them off from the road and set up an ambush by the bridge."

Chumak immediately reported his departure, went back to his squad, and in two minutes was marching with them for the ambush.

Hromenko's company set up a number of ambushes. Some were staged by the whole company, others by platoons, but most were staged by squads, for it was easier for the squad to advance and then to retreat; it could be concealed better, and the firing power from the automatics was adequate. Some squads were very successful in ambushes, but Chumak's squad could not really boast about them. The last ambush in Delyahiv was almost a failure, for they had only killed one bandit and captured one rifle. But today all signs in the heavens and on earth pointed to a successful ambush. It was to take place no more than half a kilometer from the company's camp. The approach to the bridge was through an overgrown stream. This meant that in case of trouble, a good retreat was possible.

The squad was already in the stream under the bridge. Though usually deep and broad, this mountain stream did not contain much water now. The bridge was wooden, about ten meters long, and the squad took up a good fighting position on both sides of it. In front stretched a straight road, on the

right there was a field of rye, and a bit higher up were the woods in which the company was camping. On the left side of the road, at a distance of about 100 steps, there were the houses and between them from time to time one could hear enemy fire.

It was hard to tell how long they would have to wait for the enemy, who had just entered the village and could return only in the evening. Chumak decided to provoke them and began to issue orders. "Smyk, you watch over everything well. Buk, you maintain contacts between me and the squad and I'll go and investigate."

The ditch separating the road and the field of rye was relatively deep and through it Chumak began to move toward the village. Buk was also in the ditch, taking his position between the squad and Chumak. Chumak quickly jumped over the road and was already standing behind a tree by the barn. A frightened middle-aged woman showed herself from behind the corner of the barn. She saw Chumak and became even paler and began to motion forward with trembling hands as if wanting to push the insurgent away from danger. Chumak, instead of retreating, ran up to the woman and from behind the corner, took a look into the yard. He was dumbfounded. The yard was full of enemy troops, and a Russian was shouting something in his own language. At that time Poland was a state in name only, for the purpose of external propaganda in the UN and for the Polish people, but in practice it was under Russian occupation. The Russians commanded the army, often only changing the last letter in their names to "i" to make them sound Polish.

The enemy checked the first three houses, posted heavy guards along the road which lead to Yaseniv, and apparently had every intention of moving farther into the village. Chumak thought quickly, but he could not make up his mind. Meanwhile, the frightened woman was pulling him by his coat and whispered, "Run, or else you'll perish. Can't you see how many of them are here?"

Chumak was about to let out a whole round of ammunition at the enemy mob, then realized that the squad would not be able to help him and it wouldn't be possible to capture the ammunition. At that time something unexpected happened. While the squad was setting up an ambush by the bridge, in order to greet the enemy with fire upon its return, a new

enemy unit came up from behind, very close to the bridge. Some soldiers aimed light arms in the direction of the approaching enemy and stopped it with several shots, but it quickly lay down in the ditches and began to shoot. Smyk dirtied the lock of his machine-gun while running to the other side of the stream, and it got stuck while the first round was being fired. The squad began to retreat to the forest by way of the stream. Upon hearing the first shots near the bridge, the enemy behind the houses sounded an alarm by shouting "Banderites." Chumak fired a round from his automatic in the direction of the enemy and with a few leaps was across the road and in the ditch. Buk was also retreating, while the enemy column moved toward the bridge and began shooting sharply. Access to the stream, as a means of retreat, was impossible. After hearing its own troops by the bridge, the enemy began attacking rather boldly from the village. Chumak had no other choice; he jumped from the ditch and into the field of rye and bending over, ran through it in the direction of the forest. The rye was not very high and Chumak's every movement could be seen. The enemy had just noticed this movement and began to shell the rye field. Chumak lay down in a furrow while the cut rye ears and straw were strewn all over him. He recalled his training exercises — a leap to the right and two to the left — and in such zigzags he jumped through the rye, getting closer to the forest all the time. The enemy was already running through the rye, when the company reminded it that it couldn't enter the forest. Now Chumak found himself caught in the crossfire. Suddenly something pulled at his cap, something burned under his belt. At last he reached the forest. Upon encountering strong fire from the forest, the enemy retreated to Selyska and at night crossed the Syan.

For a long time Chumak could not catch his breath. He took a canteen filled with water from the cook, drank some and poured the rest over his head. Then he stood up, hung his automatic over his left arm, and went to report to the commander. To report, but what? He approached the staff, stood at attention, raised his hand to his cap, and said nothing.

After a while the captain said reproachfully, "You're lucky that you haven't lost any men. Now go and rest, and in the future remember that commanders do not engage in scouting."

In the evening the company took up quarters in the village.

After supper Chumak went to the house near which he had stood during the ambush. The woman, who was so frightened then, now said happily,

"You, comrade, have been lucky."

"You call that luck. Look how they have torn my cap," joked Chumak pointing to the hole in the cap.

"But do you know that you have wounded three."

"Really? But were there any killed?"

"No. One wounded even left his rifle behind and I threw it into the flower bed."

"You did a fine job, mistress," answered Chumak and thought to himself: "two ambushes in a row. There a rifle and here a rifle. The hell with it."

Several days after the action in the village of Dobra, quarter-master Sokolenko read out in the orders of the day that Chumak's squad was to go to another district to carry out a special assignment. The men in Chumak's squad were ready to go to an "outing" any minute and in any direction.

Rifleman Kohut said at supper: "I have a feeling that we are going after that plump cow again."

"Oh no!" contradicted rifleman Pavuk. "According to what the quarter-master said, we are going much farther. Perhaps even to Crimea to the beach."

"What are you going to do there, when you can't swim," joked Kohut.

Chumak listened to their joking, but the news about their departure aroused his curiosity. He put on his cap, cleaned his boots a bit, and went to headquarters. He reported his arrival, took off his cap and sat by rifleman Perets, who was mending the commander's map-holder. Hromenko was taping maps, Lahidnyy was writing, the quarter-master was combing his beard, and Com. Bayda was slowly pacing the floor.

"Comrade Chumak, I'll be with you right away," apologized Com. Hromenko. At that moment Com. Bayda turned to Chumak and asked, "How far away did you travel in the world?"

Oh, thought Chumak, something is cooking here. "You mean the farthest point, as a civilian?" he asked.

"Yes," said Com. Bayda.

"Warsaw, Cracow, Czenstokhova, Lviv, Peremyshl, and Syanik," rattled off Chumak, as if reading from a book. "Why do you ask?"

Now Com. Hromenko joined in. "Comrade Chumak! Commander Ren has asked me to send him two squads of good construction workers to Khreshchata to do a special assignment. I don't know why he needs these two squads of builders. I hope that you'll be able to do this task somehow. You are to leave tomorrow morning. You have been assigned another squad from Krylach's company. The quarter-master is going to give a message for Com. Ren tomorrow, as well as a contact and a password."

"Chumak! You can be there for two or three months. Therefore check your ammunition, weapons, footwear, underwear, and take bandages, medicine, and so on. A map of the Svanik region will be given you by the quarter-master. I wish you success! Take care of your comrades!"

"Thank you," said Chumak.

He shook the commander's hand and reported his departure. When he returned to his squad, rifleman Kohut asked him.

"Where? To Kuzmyna? Am I right?"

"Oh no, brother! A bit farther," answered Chumak. The insurgents did not ask where, but one could see that they were very curious.

Chumak began. "Comrades, I can feel it in my bones, that this outing is not going to be a gay one. We are going to build something in Ren's territory. I do not know anymore. Please check your boots, underwear, ammunition, bandages, and go to sleep, for tomorrow we will be on our way." He also turned to the cook, "Go to the administrator and ask him to allot you more meat for the 'iron rations'."

At dawn the squad was ready to start. The cook carried a large pot on his back: the squad kitchen. The squad was joined by another from Krylach's company led by Shulik. Squad leader Shulik looked only eighteen, even though he was actually twenty-one. He appeared to be — and was — very childish, like an only child, but in fighting he was supposed to have been very daring. The insurgents belonging to Shulik's squad looked strong and healthy; They carried lighter arms, two automatic rifles, one machine-gun, and rifles. Also, they had fought fewer battles than the soldiers from Hromenko's company, who looked at them a bit skeptically.

The platoon, which now numbered twenty-eight men, marched through Ulyuch, the recently occupied Dobra, and

headed west. Night fell when they were not far from Tyryava, in the forest overlooking the Syan. The cook boiled water and added last night's meat to it, thus providing good soup and warm meat.

Somewhere below one could hear singing and guitar music. Several dozen steps from the campsite there rose a large cliff and behind it far below roared the Syan River, forming a semicircle around the town of Mryholod on the opposite side. Many Ukrainians used to live in Mryholod, but now it was inhabited only by Poles. Although it seemed that from this forest one could throw a rock to the town of Mryholod, the UPA detachments almost never went there because of the long and steep bank which could only be descended with the help of a rope. Even if someone managed to lower himself, he would find himself in the middle of a deep river which for centuries had been struggling with granite cliffs on that spot. Chumak and Smyk sat down on the cliffs and looked into the ravine.

"What do you think, how far is it to the water?"

"Over fifty metres," answered Chumak, adding, "This cliff looks very nice from the town's side. I was in this town several years ago. Now the town looks quiet and somewhere below near the river somebody is playing the guitar."

He did not know what Smyk was thinking, but Chumak could not stand the sound of this guitar. He recalled how many pleasant moments he had spent on this very Syan, in Dyniv and then in Peremyshl. The same river, but what a difference in circumstances. Chumak remembered how cheerful Natalka had played the guitar in Peremyshl a long time ago to the tune, "I would take the bandura..." Again the memories returned: warm supper... clean bed... girls... boys... dances... He roused himself and went to his comrades to ask if they had changed guards. Then he went to sleep. The guitar from across the Syan was silent, but the memories lingered on in Chumak's dreams.

Continuing to march farther through the forest, the men began to hear shots near by. Chumak ordered day camping in the thick of the wood and in the evening the platoon continued to move along, bypassing Tyryava and Holychka Ryakova and again spending the day on a wooded hill near Pashkova. On the following night they crossed the railroad tracks and the Syan near the village of Postolova. The waters of the

Syan were very deep and swift and it was necessary to hold hands so that no one would be carried away by the current. After crossing the river, the platoon was completely soaked. Of course, there were other fords, as the contacts man said, but this one was less dangerous. Although as recently as several days ago Chumak did not pay attention to the risk involved, today he had changed. Now he had greater responsibility. A few days ago he did not worry about where to put the wounded, where to obtain the ammunition, food, medicine, footwear, or underwear, but today he was concerned with all these problems.

After crossing the river the platoon, instead of resting, continued to march. The boys were wet and had to dry themselves as they walked, but they were just passing between Lisko and Zahirya and these towns were two additional Birchas, with two more remaining in the south, Balyhorod and Tisna. The platoon now headed in that direction. At sunup the men came to the hill called Hochev, several kilometres from Bibrka. Here they set up camp, made a fire of dry wood, so as not to create much smoke, ate the last iron rations, dried their uniforms and went to sleep. About noon the insurgents were awakened by a plane which was circling over the forest.

Chumak climbed a tree and looked at the terrain through a telescope, then consulted his map and again looked over this expansive forest. Here and there one could hear machine-gun fire; outside Balyhorod and somewhere near Dushatyn artillery shells were exploding. Nevertheless, Chumak was relieved.

"Oh brother, one can dance here," he said to his comrades. "These are not little groves like in the Peremyshl region, but massive forests."

In the evening the platoon continued to march toward Stezhnytsya, where the soldiers had potato soup and oat cakes. For two days they waited in the forest for the regional administrative officer whom they were supposed to contact here.

The early autumn was beautiful and the soldiers were sunbathing in the clearing. Their spirits were high. Only rifleman Kohut was complaining, saying, "I'm going back to the Peremyshl region for my stomach is too delicate for oat cakes."

"But you never got sick from cooked barley at home, did you?" joked Pavuk as usual.

In a nearby brook one could hear the clatter of tin cans. Buk went to check and reported that some "dame" was making bootleg whiskey there, but she wouldn't even give him a taste. When Pavuk heard this he immediately got a stomach ache.

"I'll go there; perhaps she'll give me a bit of medicine," he said.

"You're sick in the head and you can't have any alcohol."

"I am sick from that cake, and therefore must do something for my stomach," insisted Kohut.

Chumak and Smyk set out for the brook. An old woman was sitting on a log near a relatively large stream overgrown with bushes so that one could hardly see the sky. She was placing dry sticks under the bootlegging machinery. The whiskey was trickling down from twisted pipes which passed through cold water. The woman was rather small and lame in one leg. The smoke filled her eyes, but in spite of this she poured a large pail of cold water into the barrel. This whole factory, including the operator, looked very poor.

"Good day, mistress," said the men while looking at the machinery.

The woman responded politely and it was evident that she knew local insurgents for she asked, "Have you come from afar?"

Her good Ukrainian revealed that she was not a native of Lemkivshchyna. Examining the whole machinery, Smyk came close to the barrel, which held about 25 litres, and saw that it was almost filled with whiskey. The woman rinsed out two large cups, poured a spoonful of whiskey into each and handed them to the two men.

"Be careful, it's very strong!" cautioned the woman.

Smyk gulped down the whiskey all at once, then began to cough. Tears filled his eyes and he could not say a word. The woman and Chumak burst out laughing.

"Madam, I have a feeling that you were not made for an undertaking such as this," said Chumak.

"Why not?" she laughed. "A revolutionary must adjust to all kinds of circumstances."

Chumak immediately realized what she was driving at and asked, "Is this for the medical department?"

"Yes, it has been run through twice and is almost pure alcohol," replied the woman.

Chumak began to drink his portion very slowly

"Give me a canteen and I'll give a sample for your friends," said the woman.

It was late afternoon and the supply man had not yet come. The insurgents were hungry; the cooks had no food. If they only knew where they had to go from here, they would not bother waiting, but here they were supposed to receive their food rations and a further contact.

It was almost evening when a woman and a man in civilian clothes, but with a rifle, came to the platoon. The woman wore a beret and a coat. She was more than medium height, rather plump, the tops of her boots tightly fitted her rather fat but shapely legs. Under an unbuttoned coat one could see a small Belgian pistol in a holster. She sent the "civilian" with a rifle somewhere and began to question the men.

"How are you? Are you very tired? What's new in the Peremyshl region?"

The supply man still did not come and a dissatisfied Chumak began to complain: "What kind of order do you have here? For two days I have waited here with my men, but we have received neither food nor contact, when will he come?"

"Comrade, you'll have to forgive me. The fault is mine. My name is Khrystyna. I am the supply administrator for several regions, and I beg your forgiveness for the delay."

Chumak would have rather received a slap in the face. Only a moment ago he had criticized the whole regional administration before a person who headed this function.

"Don't worry comrade," she said, "criticism is sometimes very useful."

"Well, here you have an interesting revolution. Women are making bootleg whiskey; women are holding administrative posts," Chumak was now joking.

"And what did you expect, women to fight and men to distill whiskey?"

Two more armed civilians came into the clearing, one carrying oat cakes in a sack, the other leading a large ram. With the help of the entire platoon, the cooks began to prepare supper. During the meal, Khrystyna joked with the insurgents while gnawing on a lamb bone. She was repeating the conversations which she recently heard on a train to

Cracow. The Poles were saying things about us which were a hundred times greater than reality. Khrystyna became more interesting and pleasant with every passing moment. She looked twenty-six or twenty-seven years old and at one time was a student in Cracow. With her style of conversation she almost brought the insurgents to tears from laughter.

"Comrade Khrystya, we, and myself in particular, are very happy to have met you and I hope that we meet again sometime," said Chumak at leave-taking, giving her a military salute.



CHAPTER TWENTYONE

They were to go to Khreshchata to Com. Ren, and one of the civilians was the contacts man. About midnight the men crossed the Balyhorod-Tisna highway and camped for the night several kilometres within the forest of Khreshchata. Marching in a westerly direction, the platoon reached the village, the inhabitants of which were resettled last year. The village was wedged into the Khreshchata woods massif. On both sides of the village were several scores of acres of land on which only oats would grow. The village road was overgrown with grass and bushes. The village used to be called Lubny; only the last letter distinguished it from Chumak's native village. It was apparent that the land here was also worked by wild hogs. Too bad that these people were

deported, thought the insurgents. There was so much natural beauty here, which could only have been created by nature after several million years of persistent work. If I live, I'll come down here for vacation some day, thought Chumak.

Marching farther through the forest, the platoon reached a similar village, Ryaby. This village was small, with forty homesteads, and it had a nice little church. Looking at the village through a telescope from the forest, Chumak saw horses, wagons, and several people. The contacts man said that Ukrainians were also deported from Ryaby by the enemy last year and it was impossible for anyone to remain here. Something was wrong here, thought Chumak. In the Peremyshl region the enemy would not dare to enter a small forest in less than battalion strength, but here by Khreshchatyy one could see a relatively small group.

"Let's go into the village!" said Chumak.

Spread apart, the incomplete platoon approached the village. Noticing the platoon, the enemy fired several shots and began to flee. With a swift attack the insurgents captured the village. Nearly twenty enemy soldiers ran into the valley in the direction of the forest. This situation completely confused Chumak and something told him to take enemy horses and retreat to the forest as quickly as possible.

"Take the horses and in military order retreat to the forest on the double!" ordered Chumak. Squad leader Shulika and several riflemen unyoked the horses from the military wagons and led them by harness to a small road. Taking six pairs of heavy military horses, the insurgents were quite content with their booty and set out for the forest.

The platoon marched along the road, which extended along a stream in a deep valley. Only two hundred steps remained before the forest. Suddenly sharp enemy fire could be heard from the forest, the direction in which the platoon was heading. For a second, slight confusion reigned in the midst of the platoon.

"Fire! And run to the forest!" yelled Chumak. Fortunately for the insurgents, the road was turning to the stream, across a small bridge and then a thick forest began. Smyk and the ammunition carrier Kanya retreated last. Three enemy horses, left behind by the insurgents, were running loose in the field.

"What luck," said Chumak, "that this road turned into the forest."

And Kanya added, "And how stupid of the enemy not to have blocked it."

Now the platoon was marching very carefully in full military preparedness to the village of Volya Myhova.

At night Chumak was taken to Com. Ren by another contacts man. Chumak had seen the captain during a visit in the junior officers' school. Now he seemed older and even his voice was a little changed. Reporting his arrival, Chumak also reported about today's fighting.

"You Peremyshl bums," joked Com. Ren, "you're lucky that you have not lost some men." Asking about the condition of the platoon, he continued, "In the last several days, we had a large enemy raid here. Commander Khrin in the meantime engaged the enemy in a fight near Bukivsk and now the enemy troops are headed in that direction. Soon we are going to get an accurate intelligence report and if the region is going to be quiet, you will go with comrade Myron to build a hospital. You must be very careful during the work and not let the men into the villages." He took leave of Chumak and Myron and left with his guards.

The intelligence service brought good news. The enemy had left this region completely. After supping in the village of Volya Myhova, the platoon left for the designated area. After sleeping until morning on a rather thick mattress of leaves near a small but very noisy stream, which had its own natural waterfalls coming down from a steep hill, the insurgents were awakened by the warm autumn sun which was shining through the trees.

Myron, from the medical department, stood with Chumak on the opposite side of the creek, pointing here and there with his hand and telling him something. Then both of them looked at some drawings and again the finger went up or down in the direction of the stream. At this moment Chumak was looking at the drawings and pointing to something on the paper.

The awakened platoon washed in the cold waters of the stream and some began to shave, not realizing that they would not see a girl for two months. Rifleman Skupyy, who was the platoon cook, arranged pots under many-branched trees near the stream, and a rifleman assigned to help him

camouflaged the kitchen on all sides. Halan, a contacts man between the administration detachment and Myron and Chumak, went to the delivery depot with several insurgents, including squad leader Shulika. Food and equipment were delivered here in the thick bushes, and from here they had to carry it to the platoon some distance away. Unhappy rifleman Buk put several spades on the ground and, turning in Chumak's direction, said, "What? A labour battalion? Is it possible that they need people all the way from the Peremyshl region to work with spades?"

After breakfast Chumak rounded up the men. He was fully aware of the hard task that lay before him, and he did not know how to begin. Should he give orders without explanations or should he explain the reason for their presence here? On the side, several oat cakes, which here were called bread, were lying on canvas and beside them a good collection of picks, shovels, and axes. The insurgents looked at these "loaves of bread," then at the equipment and then again at Chumak.

Kohut now spoke up jokingly, "Comrade commander! For this action don't look for nice words but for a good club."

All laughed out loud, but most of all Myron. Many of these men already had four years of service in the UPA behind them and it would be wrong to treat them as recruits. There was no need to talk to them about high ideals, for in the event of being wounded they would finish themselves off so as not to fall into enemy hands and under torture be forced to betray their comrades-in-arms. Chumak called forth a bit of courage, ordered the men to sit down, smoke, and then he began to talk.

"Comrades! Our platoon was sent to a distance of over one hundred kilometres to build this hospital for secret reasons. We were supposed to come here blindfolded and to leave here the same way after the completion of our work, but yesterday's enemy raid changed all this. For this reason, do not try to remember this place. The selection of our group indicates great confidence in us. We have about two months' work here. You cannot leave this camp without my permission. We are all going to take turns working. In the event that local UPA units should pass through here, the guards are to hide in the bushes. We must get dry wood for the kitchen so as not to have much smoke. Further orders will be issued each morning

at prayers. Today we must build a hut of some kind for our use while staying here and provide for the kitchen. Are there any questions?"

Even here a sense of humour was not lacking. Pavuk asked if he could get several days' leave, and Kohut wanted a pair of gloves to handle the pick, for his hands were allegedly too delicate for work. Smilingly Chumak went off to the side and began to look at construction plans.

On the next day four guards were stationed around the camp. Inside, determined work was going on. Measurements for two large rooms, kitchen, storage area, and toilet were taken. One room was to be 7x9 metres, another 6x5 metres, the third 4x3 metres, and the toilet was to be near the stream. Much attention was devoted to camouflaging at the end of construction, so as to blend in with nearby trees, stumps, bushes, and dry leaves.

A part of the platoon dug the ground and others brought logs from the evacuated village of Lubny. The only rest was to be had on guard duty. Once a week the supply department brought in food and other necessities, leaving them in bushes and not knowing for whom they were intended. They were working hard for twelve hours a day. Hundreds of cubic metres of earth were removed from the hill and brought down by the stream. Then they began to work on the rocks, which had to be broken up by heavy hammers and iron wedges. From this work, the skin on the men's hands began to peel off. The conditions became worse every day, almost pitiful. On top of everything it began to rain. The army uniforms were bursting at the seams and the soles were falling off the boots. Many men began to grow beards. In addition, according to Kohut, his collar was being eaten away by lice. If their friends from Hromenko's company were to see them now, they would not recognize them. In the past, in the Peremyshl region these soldiers shaved every day, polished their boots, and cleaned their uniforms. There they hardly missed a single button, but here hardly any remained.

One day, when they were supporting the wall with logs, they interrupted their work for lunch — a bowl of soup with half-spoiled marinated meat — when suddenly it began to rain. Chumak appointed six men to go immediately and place more logs against the wall so that the soggy earth would not slide into the hospital. Among the six was rifleman Buk.

"I'm not going!" declared Buk.

"What do you mean?" said Chumak.

This was the first time he had come across something like this in the UPA.

"I'm not going!" Buk continued to refuse.

"Do you know what you are saying?" asked Chumak and again repeated the order.

"I volunteered for the UPA and not a concentration camp!" insisted Buk.

Rifleman Buk was perhaps the most meritorious soldier in the whole group, but nevertheless he could have been court-martialed for refusing to obey orders. The court-martial could have taken place right on the spot after selecting four men and one defender. By then the rain was coming down in buckets. It was coming through the leaves of a large tree, beating down the half-yellow leaves. It penetrated the roof of the hut and swollen drops fell upon the fire and turned immediately into steam.

The other five had not refused to work but had not gone as yet, waiting to see what would happen next. In the ranks of the UPA, to refuse to obey an order was something unbelievable, but this case had to be considered and settled reasonably. Buk's boots were ripped; all the men were soaked to the marrow and were sick and tired of life itself. But on the other hand, a breakdown of discipline while performing hard assignments meant anarchy. Thinking for several minutes and failing to find a solution, Chumak himself climbed into the hole filled with water up to his knees and began to lift the heavy log. He closed his eyes, placed his hands on his knees, which were shaking under the heavy load on his back, and with each strain moved the log upward. A distance of only one metre remained when somebody grabbed the log like a feather and placed it in the right position. Turning around, Chumak saw almost all the men at work. Even the cook had left the kitchen and was digging a ditch with a shovel to drain off the water from the large excavation. All were soaked through; all were so muddy it was hard to tell them apart. Kohut plunged into the grey soup with his head at one end of a hole which was dug deeper and climbing out of it looked like a cutlet before frying. They all had to laugh.

Halan came by in the evening and brought some news. The insurgents lighted two huge bonfires and, dressed only in

coats, were drying their underwear, uniforms, and boots, and washing in the dirty water of the stream. Kohut cheerfully declared that today he had drowned all his lice. Pavuk turned to Halan and asked, "What does the OLS report?"

"What kind of an institution is that?" asked Halan.

"Don't you know? One Lady Said!" answered Pavuk.

"This is not an OLS but accurate reports," continued Halan. "Bayda's battalion has captured the town of Dyniv. Now Poland is in turmoil again for an UPA detachment has dared to capture another base in the enemy territory."

"There, you see! They're making war there and here we have to dig holes in the Carpathians!" said Buk in a raised voice.

Halan continued, "We don't know about the casualties yet, but the capture of Dyniv is a great success. The attack was well organized. The bridges on roads around town were blown up, telegraph wires cut and, what is most important, two wagon loads of medicines were taken, in spite of the fact that Dyniv was defended by two enemy battalions."

"Too bad that we weren't there," said Chumak, for he had lived in that town for several years.

"Sure, it's a shame," confirmed Kohut. "There it would have been possible to organize a pair of pants, and here one can't even get a patch."

"You wore 'silver' ones made of sack cloth until you were twenty, so you can continue wearing them now," added Pavuk.

At night after prayers in the daily orders, rifleman Buk was punished by a four-hour guard duty for failing to obey orders. Later at the fire Buk asked Chumak, "Are you going to report me?"

"What for?" asked Chumak, "You have been punished already."

The rain had stopped but the weak autumn sun was drying mud very slowly. The building of the hospital was progressing with difficulty. At last, one room was covered by dirt more than a meter thick. Over it a tall, hollow fir tree was placed, which served as a chimney. The water from the mountain stream had been brought in by pipes and its drainage through three rooms and the toilet was adopted as a sewer. Chumak, having experience in the construction of bunkers as well as in their practical application in an underground hospital, wanted to make this hospital as comfortable as possible.

One day three wounded men were brought to the unfinished room and with them came nurse Zirka and an aid man. Chumak wondered how they could bring the wounded here. In case of an attack they would have to be defended. In this respect, the Peremyshl region, and in particular the area occupied by the Hromenko company, was much better equipped, having dozens of ready bunkers available.

The detachment of Khrin and Stakh, which was commanded by Khrin, was engaged in large battles almost daily. The enemy talked mostly about this detachment. With the increase in fighting also came an increase in the number of wounded. Three more wounded were brought to the unfinished hospital, but news had reached them that a raid on this forest had been launched. The aid man ordered a transfer of the wounded to the village of Kryve in the region of Trykutnyk. Two horses were brought to the construction site and with the help of the construction platoon the transporting of the wounded began. Those who were severely wounded rode on horseback; those slightly wounded were helped by the insurgents, and one man had to be carried on a stretcher.

They crossed the Balyhorod-Tisna highway, an area in which the UPA command had forbidden any kind of action. After bringing the wounded to their destination, the platoon returned to the construction site the same day. Squad leader Shulika rode one of the horses. Not far from Tisna, which had to be passed very inconspicuously, a shot was fired, and in the middle of the platoon at that. Halting the march, Chumak ran along the platoon's file and saw something which he never had expected. The horse which Shulika was riding tripped, and Shulikas unsecured automatic fired as he fell off the horse. The bullet pierced the horse's neck. Frightened, Shulika began to scream loudly, "Give me a bandage! Give me a bandage!" The horse was standing still, breathing hard and the blood was pouring from both sides. Chumak took the horse by the halter and led him into the bushes. The horse made several more steps and stumbled to the ground. Chumak took out a pistol and shot him. He only looked at Shulika with reproach.

Only a few days remained until the hospital would be finished. The soldiers did not have to be urged on any more. Kohut could already smell the white Peremyshl bread, and Pavuk thought of the pretty, plump Ksenya.

Now the masking of the hospital from the outside began. The trees and branches had to be washed to remove all traces of freshly dug earth; the hospital had to be covered by old leaves, and small bushes had to be planted as well as two very old and large tree stumps, which were dragged in by a horse.

It was almost hard to believe. In a wilderness that perhaps no human foot had touched was an underground UPA hospital.

"Only one more task remains to be done," said Myron. "We received a nice present from Syanik and I would appreciate it if you would help me to bring it here."

"From Syanik?" thought Chumak. "There is probably not a single Ukrainian left. Many went West and the remainder were deported or murdered by Communist bands. I wonder what kind of a present it is?"

Many different objects and packages were lying at a delivery depot. Carrying them to the hospital and unwrapping them, the insurgents could not help but wonder, being aware of the plight of Ukrainians in that city. It seems that the OUN network was well established in this region in the past. At a time when a casual onlooker would not even think that Ukrainians could still be living here the OUN network in reality was functioning very successfully, as was proved by today's delivery of supplies to the hospital. Here were mattresses, cots, kitchen utensils, medical equipment, many books, medicines, food, and even such things as coffee and sugar, as well as cigarettes. This was done by the people of Syanik at a terrible risk to themselves. It was no longer a spontaneous action but a systematic preparation for a long and fierce struggle.



CHAPTER TWENTYTWO

The insurgents looked at the place where the bunker-hospital had been built. Where only recently there had been many loose rocks, soil, and building materials around, it now looked as if a human being had never set his foot in this place.

The platoon was ready to leave when Chumak received a message from Commander Ren to build another underground bunker in the Trykutnyk. The platoon set out in that direction. Passing near the villages of Habkivtsi, Kryve, and Smereky, the men halted in the forest near the village of Vetlyna.

The Syan River flowed not too far away. In this spot it was much narrower and rather deep. On the other side of the Syan, Soviet border guards went back and forth and

on this side Chumak's platoon set up camp. This part of the country had beautiful scenery but the poor mountain soil was stingy to its inhabitants, and the peasants here were relatively poor. The soldiers, unconcealed, looked at the passing border guards at a distance of about 400-500 steps. The peasants were very happy to see the insurgents. The administrator of this region brought a calf and handed it over to the cook. The cook used even the blood and saved half of the animal for an unknown tomorrow.

In the evening the company of Bir came to the village for the night. The soldiers of the working platoon cut their beards and then shaved them off. The insurgents from the quartering company came to the quarters occupied by Chumak's platoon. They were well uniformed, well armed. Half of them were from Volhynia and Halychyna and the other half were local Lemky. When they saw their fellow-insurgents from the Peremyshl region of Hromenko's company, they could not help wondering why they looked so miserable and were in such rags. Some of them began to view them with scorn. They could not know what this platoon was doing. The soldiers of Bir judged all detachments in the Peremyshl region by the looks of Chumak's platoon.

"What, are you so poor over there?" asked one of the newcomers.

Chumak was sewing some buttons on his jacket while listening to this conversation. Here local patriotism played a part. And to everyone's surprise the native of Volhynia and Halychyna were bragging about "their" Lemky region as well as their detachment. Smyk, listening to this conversation, only winked while Buk couldn't resist asking, "Pal! And what about the fighting here? How many times did you fight this year?"

"Three times," proudly replied the well-dressed newcomer.

"And have you received your medals yet?" asked Kohut, pulling the cobbler's thread through a torn boot.

"But why don't you help Khrin's battalion?" asked Voron.

At this Chumak interrupted, "Friends! These things are the responsibility of the UPA command and not this comrade's. You better talk about girls."

"These aces will not go with me after women," joked Kohut.

Captain Bir entered the house. He was handsome, pleasant, and well dressed.

"Glory to Ukraine!" he greeted the men.

Chumak and his comrades stood at attention and Chumak reported to him their presence on his territory. Captain Bir, after inquiring about his friends from Bayda's battalion, asked, "Do you have some kind of assignment on this territory?"

"Yes, we are waiting for a contact from Arpan."

"Good! But tomorrow morning leave for the forest very early. This district is dangerous." He shook Chumak's hand and left.

Bir's company numbered 300 men and could well have been considered a battalion. Although this company had two officers from the liberation struggle of the 1918 period, neither of them would dare to take on the command and the responsibility for it himself.

At about 5 o'clock in the morning Bir's company left for the forest, and the guards informed Chumak about it. The platoon continued to camp in the village, posting guards from the direction of the forest and the Syan.

In a spacious Lemky house which served as a bedroom, dining room, kitchen, and living-room, a huge stove provided heat all night. Grandfather slept with his grandson on the stove and another one in the cradle which was suspended from the ceiling. When the latter awoke, grandfather kicked the cradle with his foot and the swinging grandson continued to sleep. On the floor, coated with clay, slept the insurgents, on several stems as Kohut liked to say. Some of them had colds and did not want to leave the warm house.

At night much snow fell outside and it was bitter cold. Around eight o'clock the guard woke the cook but the rest continued to sleep, in full military gear, as usual.

Around nine o'clock a shot was fired somewhere near the forest. In a few seconds the platoon was outside but Chumak, dishevelled, did not know where he was. Oh yes, the Syan, the houses, the stream, and the forest and he was already at "home."

Smyk, Kanya, and Buk ran and took up positions by the stream. The platoon was retreating to the forest! If the stream had been cut off by the enemy, thought Chumak, it was going to be hot here. Retreating by a rather deep stream,

they could hear enemy voices and shots from the right side. Should the enemy get control of the stream now, the whole platoon would be shot one by one like rabbits. It was pretty hard to climb out of the stream and onto the bank. Smyk was climbing up; his machine-gun slipped. At last he reached the bank of the stream and was joined by Buk and Kanya. The cook was catching up with them; he had to return for the forgotten half of the calf. The enemy noticed him as he was disappearing into the stream and turned in that direction.

The Polish troops, notified by Soviet border guards that the UPA troops were in the village, for reasons of prestige dared to attack before the older brother did. They flanked the village beneath the forest in an open field. Some of them were on horseback. Seeing the running cook with the meat, who had disappeared somewhere in the stream, the cavalry turned to the stream. There Smyk had already set up his machine-gun on its legs and greeted them with a long series. Three horses fell down. One could hear the scream of the wounded and a rush in panic through a snow-covered field to another stream. The remainder of the squad had already taken up positions along the forest's edge and was firing at the fleeing enemy.

After the fighting the platoon went deep into the forest and the contacts man from the Red Cross, Arpad, was already with them. Starting a large bonfire, the men were keeping warm and the cook was cooking the other half of the calf. On the side, Arpad and Chumak were talking about the decision of Commander Ren.

"I explained to the commander the general condition in which the platoon finds itself. That without receiving new uniforms and footwear it will not be able to start another project. He agreed and let the three of us decide, that is, Com. Bir, you, and I."

"We'll take a vote," joked Chumak.

At night Chumak and Arpad went to the well-concealed camp of Bir company, and the platoon, so as not to give away the place of their camp, spent the night in the woods by the fire.

The sun was setting over the hills. The new white snow covered the Carpathians and the view from here was beauti-

ful. On a high hill Arpad stopped Chumak and told him about the area.

"You see these hills directly to the south. Behind them is Uzhhorod, about 80 kilometres beyond. Down below, behind this hill, is the source of the Syan and there the Soviet border begins. And to the left behind that mountain lies the town of Turka!"

"So close?" asked Chumak.

"Around twenty kilometres."

"And how far is the Slovak border? On the map it seems to be very near."

"On this other mountain to the right," Arpad pointed with his finger. "Approximately ten kilometres."

"What beauty!" said Chumak.

"And what reality!" added Arpad.

All around, large massifs of forests could be seen from here. Some mountains were mixed, with white and dark pines; others, taller, were only white, for nothing grew there anymore.

Beyond the clearing to the left a large forest began, extending to the south. Arpad and Chumak went in that direction, and an outpost halted them deep in the forest. Exchanging watchwords, the guard declared that he could not let Chumak in without first consulting the commander and sent his comrade into the depths of the forest. Receiving permission, both comrades entered the camp. Chumak could not get over his amazement. The camping methods and the style of life of this company were completely different from those of all the detachments in Zakerzonnya. Here there were about thirty huts, dug halfway into the ground. The huts were spacious, warm, and comfortable. Weapons were hanging on the walls, the bed-bunks were covered by pine needles, which added a pleasant odor. Great cleanliness was evident everywhere. Defence trenches were dug all around. A beautiful setting for a Hollywood movie, thought Chumak. The revolution here looked a bit too romantic, or perhaps he was a bit jealous, after the hardships recently undergone by his platoon. His soldiers were sleeping on snow, for they were not received here for reasons of secrecy. Chumak was a bit hurt by this decision, but then he thought that perhaps they were right.

In the hut, which served as Commander Bir's headquarters,

there were five officers. They greeted the new arrivals and began to tell them a few things, but mostly they asked questions.

"Comrade Commander," interrupted Chumak, "I'm very pleased to be here, but I must return to my platoon. I would like to know what we are doing." "And what do you think?" asked Captain Bir "You see," began Arpad, "the plans have changed a bit. We thought that we were going to finish two projects before the winter set in, but because the first one is much bigger than originally planned, it took longer to build. The platoon is almost naked and barefoot."

"And what do you think?" the captain asked Chumak.

"If it's an order," began Chumak, "then we are going to start work right away. But first I must have clothes, footwear, and blankets for the men to sleep on and a delivery of building material to the depot. Although, in my opinion, it would be best to send the platoon back to the Peremyshl region. If it is a question of my building experience, then I can stay. Moreover, all hospitals in the Peremyshl region were built by our own men. And what is most important, it would be impossible to camouflage the hospital in the winter. When the snow melts, you are going to see the building site a mile away. And to have your people camouflaging it in the spring, then they might as well build it."

"You're right!" remarked Captain Bir. "Natural camouflaging is completely impossible in the winter, therefore it is better when you are going to join your unit for the winter."

A contacts man entered the hut. He reported his arrival and began, "This morning the enemy had rather serious losses near the village where we were stationed last night. Three were killed and five wounded. Four dead horses are lying near the forest." After the report the contacts man asked what group it was that engaged in battle. People said that the group looked very poor and wore torn uniforms.

"The platoon which was engaged in fighting this morning belongs to Balda's battalion from the Peremyshl region," explained the captain.

Chumak rose and wanted to take his leave, but he was detained by the captain who turned to the supply sergeant.

"Do you have any spare uniforms in camp?"

The supply sergeant left the hut and returned in several minutes with three pairs of shoes and four German jackets. Chumak placed the gifts on his left arm, hung the automatic across his shoulders, shook hands and then in a military fashion reported his departure. . Arpad walked with him as far as the outpost. Here they said goodby and Chumak left for his platoon.

It was a beautiful calm, moonlit evening. The bitter December frost was biting at the ears and nose. The natural acoustics, created by the Almighty, were now so strong that even the breaking of a match could be heard far away. Near the town of Tisna one could hear rifle fire, which echoed between the hills. A freight train, or what seemed like one, was going from Uzhhorod in the direction of Sambir, for it groaned a great deal and from time to time its strong whistle could be heard. Chumak was approaching the burning fire among the trees and thought about the comfortable huts of Bir's company. Other companies should come here to rest, he thought. The adaptation of such a camp to other regions was completely impossible.

Joining the platoon, Chumak asked, "O.K. men, where are we going? Are we spending the night here or are we leaving for the Peremyshl region right away?"

They all rose from the pine-covered ground, thus proving their readiness to march immediately. The fire was put out and the platoon was on its way.

Now the compass and the map served as contacts men. On the second evening the platoon crossed the Syan near the village of Lukove and then passed Dzyuriv in the direction of Lisk.

On the fourth day the platoon had progressed as far as Lyakhova. Here Shulik's squad left for its own company and Chumak's squad went in the direction of Hrushivka, which was near Hromenko's company.

Chumak reported his arrival and Captain Hromenko asked about everything and sent the squad to rest.

During the squad's absence the company was engaged in several large-scale fights but the men were most proud of the capture of the town of Dyniv.

In several days the company launched a fierce battle on the Polish side across the Syan and burned oil wells in the

village of Vitryliv. On the same day oil wells were burned in other places as well. Burlaka's company burned them in the village of Tyryava.

Beginning with the first snowfall of the year, the winter was very severe. The thermometer sank to 40°C below zero. The company camped in a different village almost every day.



CHAPTER TWENTY THREE

The world was ringing in the year 1947 and for the Ukrainian people it was the 30th anniversary of their struggle for independence. The detachment celebrated Christmas Eve in the village of Rybne. As in the previous years, the holiday atmosphere was animated. The men tried not to think about the uncertain tomorrow. So far, their weapons were a guarantee of freedom and they made full use of it.

Moscow's puppets in Warsaw, Communist Swierczewski and his staff, were beginning to press harder for the destruction of UPA detachments. Swierczewsky was pressured by Moscow, and he in turn pressured his underlings. At present he placed 55,000 troops, besides great numbers of police and agents, against the UPA detachments in Zakerzonnya. Swierczewski was very ambitious, a fanatical Communist,

and his experience in the Spanish Civil War came in very handy here. His plan was simple: to sacrifice ten of his men for each insurgent and to finish with them during the winter months or, as he said, to catch them like rabbits by following their tracks. His subordinates were ordered to track down and liquidate the UPA detachments. In practice, however, things were different. The first great attack on Hromenko's company in the Dylyahivskyi forest was undertaken by an entire enemy regiment. The company's outposts, noticing the enemy, greeted him with fire. The captain, who already had a plan of action, ordered a retreat, in snow which was waist deep. Consequently the retreat occurred in a single file on a well-trodden path. An enemy attack could have been effective only in a spread-out position, in which event each enemy soldier would have had to make his own way in deep snow. Changing its tactics, the enemy began to advance along the path stamped out by the company until an UPA mine exploded and reminded the enemy scouts that this path could only be used by the insurgents. And even though no other mine had been planted along this path, no enemy soldier dared to walk on it.

The enemy began to make its own path, side by side with the UPA path, and continued to pursue the detachments. Here again the company's hidden machine-gun reminded the enemy that it could not attack in a single file, for one bullet could kill three or four in a row.

At dinner, platoon commander Bartel was joking. "I'd like to read the enemy report about today's raid."

At this moment Chumak was thinking something else: what would our defence have been today without Commander Hromenko?

After dinner the company marched farther; making a circle, it reached the place where the enemy attack had begun. The scouts, approaching very carefully, noticed two or three enemy soldiers here. Their troops were chasing the Banderites far away, they thought, so they confidently started a fire and were warming themselves, waiting for their own men to return. Suddenly an automatic was thrust at them.

"Hands up!"

These three Poles were a bit "smarter." One tore off the soles from his boots purposely, to have a reason not to fight, another got frostbite on his hands, and the third, an aid man,

was attending to them at the edge of the forest until their own troops returned. Upon being questioned, these "heroes" said that frostbitten hands and feet could be cured in the hospital in no time at all, but they did not want to fight. They were young and wanted to live.

The captain decided to ambush the enemy here upon his return. But the enemy did not return for a long time but continued to make its own path beside that of the UPA. At last the enemy was again greeted by a guerrilla machine-gun, and the insurgents again left by their own path, taking the weapons and medicines from the captives and leaving them the literature of the Ukrainian liberation movement. In the woods it was getting dark; evening was falling and the enemy decided to retreat across the Syan.

The soldiers got used to the fighting as if it were a sport, and although life was dear to them, they were addicted to fighting. The commanding officers, and in particular the captain, were most afraid for the men's lives. He was first in battle and unusually brave but as a good strategist and tactician he was well aware that in such a difficult struggle as this, besides being courageous the soldiers had to adhere to military rules. One action or one wrong decision was enough to lose a whole detachment in a single battle. Often before the start of an action the captain would say, "Comrades! Remember the military rules at all times," and then added jokingly, "By now you should have learned how to walk among bullets, but when the need arises you have to be ready to risk your life. In order to save several of your comrades don't hesitate, brother."

At present, the company represented a strong monolith and the loss of several soldiers would have weakened it considerably, while recruiting new forces was even dangerous. The command understood this very well, and new forces were not sought.

Two days later, the enemy took an SB unit and a field gendarmerie by surprise in the village of Ulyuzh. While retreating to the forest they engaged in a fierce battle. Comrade Kamin from the FG was surrounded. He killed four enemy soldiers and then, realizing the hopeless situation, shot himself. Kamin was Chumak's good friend from before the war. He was buried in the village of Rybne with full military honours and the participation of the whole company.

The snow had stopped falling, but it remained waist-deep everywhere, and severe frosts began. The company camped in the woods, each time in a different place.

In spite of intensified enemy activity, the company was launching a propaganda campaign across the Syan into the village of Nizdrets, which was enemy territory. The entire population of Nizdrets was Polish. Here a Polish military unit was stationed, as well as strong local police force. The frost was demonstrating its force. A thick layer of ice covering the Syan was splitting from time to time with the force of an explosion and the hands were sticking to steel weapons as if glue. The once black beard of the supply sergeant had turned white from the frost and ice was hanging on its ends.

With the intensified enemy advance into the territories on which UPA was active, the enemy never expected that the company was going to come to Nizdrets as an uninvited guest. Crossing the Syan, covered with thick ice and snow on top, the company occupied the part of the village where there were no enemy troops. A strong patrol was sent in the direction of the building occupied by the district government and the manorial buildings where the army was quartering, and the company began to go into different houses. The police headquarters were located in the part of the village where the company had now dispersed. Such propaganda raids brought good results, for they gained many friends for the UPA detachments. Such propaganda raids were even more successful deep into Poland than in the villages just across the Syan where many troops were stationed and the atmosphere had been charged for years. Going into the houses, the insurgents there encountered suspicious and frightened Polish peasants.

In one house, the insurgents found the local commandant of the Polish police at supper. They began to joke with him without disarming him. The commandant of SB, Petya, was notified about this and in several minutes, the two commandants were shaking hands like old friends, except that the hands of the Polish commandant were shaking for some reason. The Polish police were fleeing between the houses in the direction of the stationing troops. Suddenly shots could be heard in the village. In several minutes the company was put on alert. Ready to fight at any moment the insurgents left the houses and assembled at the meeting place in platoons.

No more shots were heard for the moment, but after some

time strong machine-gun fire could be heard from the direction where the enemy troops were stationed. The enemy troops were not thinking of an attack but were preparing a defence near the buildings in which they were quartered.

To the company's rallying place the comrades brought a squad leader who was killed by the enemy. He was shot to death by a Polish policeman who fled in the direction of the army. The death of one of the best squad leaders was a great blow to the company, all the more so since in addition to being a good junior officer he was always cheerful, had a good voice, and also acting ability.

It would have been enough for the captain to have given an order of revenge, and in an hour's time the whole village, including the military base, would have been turned into ashes, but no such order was given. The company crossed the Syan carrying the body of the squad leader and the men working for commandant Petya led the disarmed and blindfolded chief of the Polish police on a rope. Passing by the captive Kohut said, "I would tie the neck not the eyes of that son of a . . ."

After two hours of marching, the detachment reached the place where they had camped the day before, the woods near the village of Huta. Bonfires, whose flames reached the tops of trees yesterday, had not yet died down and when new wood was thrown on them they began to burn again. After removing snow from the insurgent's mattresses made of pine needles, the men lay down to sleep. They covered themselves with coats and pieces of canvas, making sure that the top layer of canvas was wet with snow. While freezing, this snow served as insulation between the warm bodies of the insurgents and the bitter cold outside. Pavuk complained about the onion which Kohut had eaten yesterday and swore that he wouldn't sleep with him again. The Polish police chief was sitting by the fire, shivering. His blindfold had been untied and he was given a large fur coat, but he continued to grind his teeth and would not say a word. Commandant Petya treated him very tactfully while Commander Lahidnyy and SB leader Letun listened to the valuable information-testimony of the Polish chief.

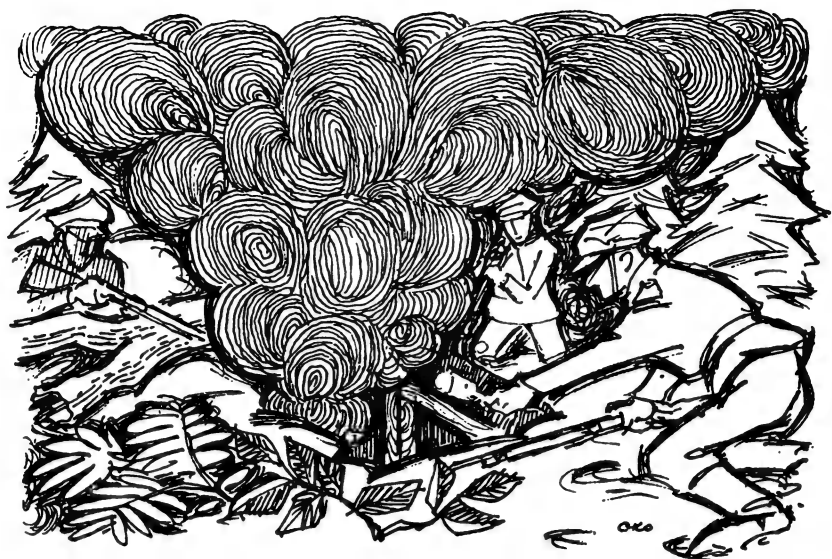
After dinner the sun began to shine through the clouds but its rays were so weak that it looked more like a large-size moon. The company left for the funeral of the dead squad

leader. In the grave, the canvas-covered body was heaped with frozen earth and snow. Father Kadylo took leave of the deceased on behalf of all and asked God to give the deceased's comrades-in-arms strength and hope in the uneven struggle.

At night Commandant Petya and two men from his unit took the blindfolded Polish police chief back to his village. On the bank of the Syan he was turned around several times and his eyes were unbound. Here the Pole smoked a cigarette and began to feel very sure of himself. When asked by Petya whether or not he was afraid that he might be executed he replied, "If you were going to shoot me you would not have bound my eyes." An unloaded pistol was returned to him; they shook hands and all went their own way.

The enemy raids against the UPA detachments became more frequent with each passing week. Whole transports of enemy troops came by train to the cities of Peremyshl, Syanik, and Dyniv. The enemy mobilized several age groups. The fiercest battles were now waged by the battalion of Khrin. All Poland was talking about Khrin's detachment. The released police chief from Nizdrets also talked about it. He asked whether or not it was true that Khrin's division merged with Rizun's division and that they were engaged in heavy battles in the Carpathians. Petya authoritatively confirmed this by a shake of the head.

If the statistics of military reports were preserved, the reader could find out from them that in the winter of 1947 the UPA detachments throughout Ukraine were engaged in many fierce battles with the occupation powers. Burlaka's company, which at present was almost always acting in conjunction with Lastivka's company, engaged in several serious battles and sustained rather heavy losses, but enemy losses were ten times as great. In his report, quartermaster Sokolenko recorded seventeen battles and clashes for the month of January, 1947, alone.



CHAPTER TWENTY FOUR

Alarming news came from the Carpathians where Khirin's battalion was operating. There had been a great and painful loss. On January 23, 1947, a hospital with its entire medical staff and wounded was captured, at Khreshchata. Altogether, seventeen persons died there. On the evening of January 22, medical assistant Arpad and one of the recovered wounded lifted the tiny doors of the hospital and saw that a terrible snowstorm was raging outside. They decided to provide the hospital with several days' supply of wood. They climbed outside and chopped up a large log and brought the wood to the rooms underground. Here the forest looked like a wilderness. A great many old fallen trees were lying about, and it was easy to deliver a supply to the hospital. After spending two weeks underground, Arpad felt very happy in the snow;

even the strong wind and frost seemed at this moment to be very pleasant. It was quite dark when the comrades closed the hatch behind them, leaving the job of concealing their footsteps in the snow to mother nature. The wind would blow and the snow would cover them. Unfortunately, however, the opposite occurred. The wind raged for another half hour or so, covered the deep tracks of Arpad and his friend half way, then stopped. The weather became completely clear outside.

The hospital turned out to be more practical than was originally planned. Fresh water at all times and good plumbing created real comfort. The wooden floor was covered with a rug which, although well worn somewhere in Syanik in the home of a doctor or a priest, here still had great value, giving the wounded an opportunity to walk barefoot. Besides the food in the storage room there was a large barrel of kerosene for the lamp. The ventilation system drew out stale air through a large hollow fir tree over the tops of smaller trees. By an unwritten law it was decreed that the wounded and the staff should sleep during the day and carry on their normal activities during the night.

Closing the entrance door behind him, Arpad took off his fur coat, rubbed his frozen hands, and turned on the radio. On a Lviv radio station, he got the news, in Russian, about the success of the Italian Communists against the Pope and the Italian government. Changing the station, he got Czech music on another one, so he lowered the receiver and left it so. Pharmacist Orest was busy with herbs from which he was making drugs and conducting some experiments. Doctor Ratai was lying in bed, reading a book. This hospital had room for about 30 wounded but now it had only 13, all of whom were well on the way to recovery. The slightly wounded were placed in other hospitals closer to villages. Nurse Natalka interrupted the doctor's reading. She was now reading "Baturyn" from Lepkyy's trilogy and wanted to discuss it with the doctor. Nurse Oksana was washing dishes as well as the whole kitchen, and at the same time singing in her good alto voice. In another room some wounded insurgents were joking, while others played cards. At dawn Oksana warmed up some linden tea and all drink some.

The enemy had planned a large raid to the Khreshchata mountain, for January 23rd. One regiment from Balyhorod

advanced through Mykiv, another one came up from the direction of Volya Myhova, and the third, from Tisna, attacked from the Tisna-Balyhorod highway. Khrin's battalion camped in the woods near Komancha. The regiment from Tisna, after crossing the ghost village of Lubny, entered the forest with great caution. Convincing themselves that for the time being there was no resistance, the enemy troops moved slowly into the depth of the forest through deep snow. Coming into the vicinity of the hospital, the enemy noticed somebody's tracks, not so well covered by snow. These tracks led to a large old stump. Digging around the stump, the enemy soldiers noticed that the stump moved. Giving it a strong push, the hinge broke and a large hole which led to the hospital revealed itself under the overturned stump. Firing several rounds inside, the bandits began to shout.

"Come out! Hands up!" The Polish Communist barbarians were triumphant. If those 13 wounded and four hospital attendants could only come outside and take up firing position the situation would have been quite different. But this was impossible. The enemy opened strong fire at the entrance. Their officers were the same as their primitive Polish bands. At every opportunity they bragged about their poverty in civilian life and at present their sloppiness and dirty outward appearance assured them the praise due to a good Communist. The major of the group, who was now in the process of capturing the UPA hospital, was lying low behind a thick tree in the background and shouted continuously, "Forward!"

He was thinking about the great praise and medals that he would receive.

From time to time grenades were being tossed from the hospital and bursting above. The entrance to the hospital led through the storage room and the grenades could not destroy the insurgents who were in other rooms. Doctor Ratai shot in the direction of the exit. A section of the storage room was buried as the result of enemy grenades. The insurgents defended themselves for about two hours. If this incident had taken place in any other part of the world, the members of the hospital could have climbed outside, for they were part of the Red Cross, whose rights are guaranteed by an international agreement. This would have been possible in any other part of the world, but not in the "kingdom of Stalin, where a man breathes so freely." They knew well

what pain and tortures awaited them with death all the same at the end. They defended themselves bravely all day long. As the result of enemy grenades, the hospital became filled with smoke. In the first hours of defence, the hospital was in panic. All were running about, all wanted to do something, and the soldiers most of all wanted to defend the hospital. But there was only room for one defender, by the tiny door in the direction of the storage room. The supply of ammunition was dwindling and evening was coming on. The enemy started bonfires around the hospital, posted guards on all sides, and aimed several machine-guns at the entrance to the hospital.

There was no panic in the hospital any longer. Nurses Oksana and Natalka bandaged the men wounded by grenade fire and prayed all the time. There wasn't even any thought about breaking out of their surroundings. Only one hope remained: the battalion of Khrin. If he had only known.

Receiving a supply of tear grenades, the enemy began to use them, hoping thus to capture alive the staff and the wounded and use them for intelligence purposes. The fumes burned the throat and eyes of the insurgents. There was no way out any more and each began to decide his own fate. Loud prayers were heard in the hospital, which were interrupted by each with his own weapon. Oksana pulled the trigger of a small Belgian pistol. Her delicate body tumbled to the floor and the hand which was still holding the pistol was covered with her wild black hair. Doctor Ratai, with a wounded arm and face, continued to stand by the door of the storage room and look up into the rather large opening. From this opening grenades continued to fall and to explode, ruining logs and walls and making the opening bigger and bigger. From time to time Dr. Ratai fired a round from the automatic into the opening. His eyes were filled with blood mixed with tears which showed themselves on the face of this staunch revolutionary perhaps for the first time since childhood. He was not crying from fear but from grief for his comrades, the bodies of whom were strewn about him and whose spirits begged the Almighty for perseverance in the final moment of this fierce struggle.

The smoke and gas burned his eyes and, holding a wet rag against his mouth, he coughed violently and began to lose consciousness. He was afraid of this most of all. He had to



act, and fast, he thought, so as not to fall into the devil's hands. This thought gave him new strength. He remembered the kerosene barrel in the corner and began to crawl to it on all fours. He dragged a straw mattress to the barrel, poured kerosene over it and then threw a burning match at it. The fire raged in the corner, but the doctor dragged himself to the door once more. Outside he could hear the foul language of the enemy. The hospital, lit by the fire, gave him an opportunity to look once more at his comrades. They lay peacefully on the floor of the hospital and Natalka looked better now than when she was alive.

It's a good thing that he had set the blaze. The scoundrels were not going to mock the corpses now, he thought. Now it's time to finish with himself, for he could never forgive himself if he let himself be captured by the enemy. He was about to pull the trigger of his automatic when his loving wife and two small daughters appeared before his eyes.

"O my God! Where are you? Why can't I see you any more? Mother of God! Help me! You have been the patroness of the Ukrainian army since ancient times."

The fire began to burn him and he lost consciousness for a moment, then recovered again. He had to hurry or it would be too late. He turned the automatic toward his chest and pulled at the trigger with all his strength. A whole round pierced his chest.

Clouds of smoke rose from the hospital below. They were holding a funeral for the greatest heroes of the Ukrainian people. This funeral was presided over by 500 criminals of Moscow and Warsaw.

Khrin's battalion marched quickly through deep snow in the direction of black smoke rising over the forest. The patrol, which was in front of the battalion, noticed an enemy machine-gun turned in their direction, while the attention of its crew was absorbed by the black smoke over the forest.

"Hands up!" called the insurgents and three barrels of automatics, ready to fire, were turned at the enemy. Two raised their hands, and the third began to run and was brought down by a series from an automatic. The captives were handed over to the Field Gendarmerie and the battalion began to move in the direction of the hospital as quickly as possible.

The round which cut down an enemy guard alarmed the

enemy, and the latter, realizing that an UPA detachment was advancing, raised panic around the burning hospital. Now they were no longer dealing with the wounded in an underground hospital, but with Khrin's detachment, the very thought of which made their blood run cold. The enemy units began to flee in panic to their dens in Lisk and Balyhorod.

Driving the enemy away, the battalion returned to the place where the hospital once stood. The smoke was still pouring out from the opening. Commander Khrin ordered his battalion to stand at attention while he paid the final respects to the fallen heroes. He delivered a short eulogy by the open grave and the battalion swore to take revenge on the enemy for its barbaric deeds. The death of those comrades was considered by Com. Khrin not only as the death of the UPA's heroes but also as the loss of his best friends, which one acquires only in battle.

The news of the destruction of the hospital at Khreshchata quickly spread around all UPA detachments. It was also well publicized by the enemy camp, which considered this action as a great achievement. Writing about this hospital, the Polish and Czech press commented that such a hospital could have been built and provided for only with help from abroad. Instead of hushing up this attack, which in reality was the most shameful and base of all enemy acts, the enemy used this action as a moral foundation for its units, after first misrepresenting it completely. Communist self-styled politicians talked about the discovery and destruction of the hospital for a long time.

In the meantime, battalion commander Khrin was making his plans. He ordered the military and the civilian intelligence services to watch the enemy detachments carefully. The enemy units often passed along the highway Syanik-Balyhorod-Tisna. The stretch of the road from Balyhorod to Tisna led through a large forest between the villages of Stezhnytsya, Sukovate, and Lubne. The fallen hospital was only about three kilometres from this highway and all UPA regiments were forbidden to engage in battles or ambushes along this road so as not to attract enemy forces to the forest. For the time being the enemy's privileges on this road were terminated.

On March 26, 1947, the secret service brought news that a military inspection team from Warsaw had arrived in Syanik and that most likely it would also visit Balyhorod and Tisna.

Some government "big shots" were supposed to have been there. Two days later, Khrin's battalion, well trained for this special assignment, was crossing Khreshchata on its way to the place of the ambush. Along the way it halted near the hospital site, destroyed by the enemy, and here Commander Khrin once more reminded his men of the base enemy act and recalled their pledge to revenge their dead companions.

The battalion reached the place of the ambush, took up positions, well concealing itself, and waited. The sun which had just risen began to warm up the soil and to pull from it green grass and spring flowers, as if by a magnet, and higher up in the mountains to melt the remaining patches of snow.

Today's action had a double aim: to punish the enemy for the destruction of the hospital and to prevent him from using this road.

Suddenly several trucks, filled to the brim with troops, appeared on the road. The trucks were moving rather fast, as if wanting to pass the woody stretch as quickly as possible. The trucks were followed by three armoured cars, and behind them several luxurious limousines with guards at each side. Bald heads, bright stars on the shoulders, and medals on the chest attested to the high rank of the guests. Com. Khrin looked at them and let them pass as far as the middle of the battalion. The intelligence service was working well, he thought. Who were these generals? Even some Polish officers from Syanik had no idea. Their identity was known only to several trusted Poles and to the UPA intelligence. These were the people who were planning our destruction, thought Commander Khrin. In order not to let them go too far he ordered, "Fire!"

Hurricane-force fire greeted the distinguished guests and the most honour was accorded to the bald head riding in an American limosine. The escaping air from the tires whistled; water poured from the radiators, mixing with enemy blood. Some armoured cars, instead of protecting their generals, speeded up and fled to the town of Tisna; the rear guard ran to Balyhorod. In the middle of the road near the cars some wounded were crawling to the stream, others put up resistance. A bald-headed general wearing a white coat crawled out of the wrecked limousine, which stood across the road, and dragged himself to the stream on his stomach. He was the one who had planned the whole anti-UPA action,

and who had ordered the four age-groups to be mobilized throughout Poland. He had planned the deportation of all Ukrainians from the Ukrainian territories of Lemkivshchyna. This was General Swierczewski. By the stream one more insurgent bullet caught up with him and he, turning over on his face, satisfied his predatory revengefulness forever. This terrible enemy of the Ukrainian people was lying powerless on the road, wearing the torn uniform of a general and his revengeful, opened eyes gazed at UPA members, smiling with irony. Near him was another dead general and many officers of high rank.

Elated by its great success, Khrin's battalion retreated into the depths of the forest.

Hromenko's company learned about the death of Gen. Swierczewski the following day, when the news was broadcast by radio stations throughout the world.



CHAPTER TWENTY FIVE

Nobody even mentioned the snows and the terrible cold of last winter. A beautiful spring reigned here now. The bare trees of not so long ago were dressing themselves in various shades of green and the orchards blossomed and then burst into green leaves. The birds, which had said goodby to the insurgents last fall, were cheerfully singing to them again. The enemy showed himself more frequently in the area; battles were waged more often, but victory continued to be on the side of the UPA.

Easter was approaching. The peasants were inviting Father Kadylo to hold Easter services in their villages. Knowing that the enemy would certainly attack the villages during the holidays, Father Kadylo discussed the matter with the company staff and it was decided to hold Easter service and the

blessing of Easter bread in the Volodhzskyy forest in the clearing. The place was easily accessible from the villages of Yaseniv, Poruby, Huta, Volodz, Volya, and Hrushivka.

In the middle of the forest was a large clearing; near it flowed a creek and around it were the woods. The idea was picked up by each revolutionary unit and the preparation for the holidays was in full swing. A few days before Easter the altar, tables, and benches were built. The peasants, finding out about the joint Easter dinner, baked, cooked, and filled their baskets. In addition, Burlaka's company came to the clearing for a visit. The people from nearby villages began to assemble here from early morning, bringing full baskets. Besides the 600 members of the Liberation Movement, over 1,000 peasants were here. Chaplain Kadylo said Mass, the choir sang under the direction of Dr. Shuvar, and was joined by all participants. When at the end of the service the hymn "Khrystos Voskres" was sung, it was heard even by those who stayed behind at home in the villages. After the blessing of Easter bread, all sat down to the Easter meal. The mood was very cheerful and the older women even cried from joy. The peasants continued to join this celebration. Here "hahilky" were held. The insurgents dispersed among the peasants and their friends and relatives. The women invited them to their baskets and some men took bottles out of their pockets and treated the insurgents. Today there was no prohibition on drinking.

- After dinner Father Kadylo told his companions and commanders, "Those who are going to live through this terrible struggle will remember today's celebration as long as they live."

Suddenly a sharp machine-gun fire was heard at the edge of the forest from the direction of Yaseniv. The guards came up to the commander and reported that the enemy was approaching the forest. The people quieted down for a moment but there was no panic. The units were in such a cheerful holiday mood that they received the enemy fire as a warning shot. The commander sent only one squad to face the enemy and told squad leader Voron, "If there is a larger enemy force there, report to me immediately."

Squad leader Voron, short in stature, delicate and looking more like a girl than a guerrilla, led his squad to the edge of the forest, where the outpost was repulsing an enemy attack.

Leaving several soldiers by the outpost, he ran with the remaining soldiers along the edge of the forest to the spot where the brook, overgrown with bushes, joined the village with the forest. This was a daring move. The enemy troops numbered about three hundred and Voron wanted to approach them from the side and to disperse them by means of flank fire. To everyone's surprise he managed to do this. A strong fire from the outpost and Voron's attack from the side, and the enemy fled in panic. Then an enthusiastic Voron ran out into the clear field and began to fire one round of ammunition after another. In the past in a situation such as this there would have been widespread panic and people would be running in all directions. But the recent years of struggle and suffering had conditioned the peasants as well. Today they were sure of themselves; they sang holiday songs, for they were defended by their sons.

Voron, perhaps still in holiday spirit (with several companions), had followed the enemy escaping to Selyska, a bit too far. He was running without stopping as if wanting to finish off the enemy as soon as possible and to return to the clearing in the forest where his fiancée Stefa, from Rybne, was celebrating Easter along with the others. The routed enemy began to put up strong resistance and Voron in turn began to attack more strongly. Suddenly an enemy bullet pierced his chest and he fell to the ground. His comrades brought him to the clearing. His breathing became more difficult. Insurgents and peasants ran up to him, and Dr. Shuvar tried to save him. But Voron suddenly weakened completely, dropped his arms, and his head rolled powerlessly to the side. Father Kadylo made a sign of the cross over him. Dr. Shuvar did all he could but it was too late.

It was dark when the people began to go back to their villages. Burlaka's company left for the Peremyshl region and Hromenko's detachment set up quarters in the village of Yaseniv, and on the following morning set up camp in the Dylyahivsky forest.

A future historian will have a hard time figuring out why, during and after World War II, Poland put up greater resistance against several thousand Ukrainian guerrillas than against all of Hitlerite Germany.

After the liquidation of Swierczewski, new draft calls were

issued in Poland. Day and night, entire trains transported troops in the direction of Syan.

Realizing that it was beyond its strength to liquidate the UPA detachments, the enemy resolved to put Swierczewski's plan into effect and to deport several hundred thousand Ukrainians from Lemkivshchyna. The deportation action was to be conducted solely by military units. For this purpose, nine divisions were moved along the Syan and numerous police units and civilian administration were also placed at their disposal. This campaign, which up to this time was headed by the first deputy of state security, Swierczewski, was now taken over by the Minister of Defence himself. In addition, Poland signed a treaty with Russia and the CSSR with the aim of combating UPA detachments. The UPA command was well aware of this plan and began to lay plans for a counter-action.

Contacts between the detachments, the Sectional Commander Orest and Regional Commander of OUN for Zakerzonnya, Orlyk, who at the same time was a member of the Ukrainian Supreme Liberation Council, were broadened. Commander Orest had his headquarters in the Yavoriv and Bilohorshcha regions. There the UPA was also engaged in heavy fighting. The staff of Com. Orest was spread among several underground bunkers in order to keep documents and various archives secret. In these underground offices several dozen people were working with complete office equipment. Its tactical section extended over the whole Zakerzonnya region and part of the Lviv area. One of the contacts between the OUN leadership abroad, the UHVR and the Supreme Command of the UPA, passed through Orest's staff. Contact between the staff of Orest and the UPA detachments passed at least once a week.

Today three contacts men from Sectional Commander Orest came to the camping site of Hromenko's company in the Dylyahivskyy forest. Handing the mail over to Quartermaster Sokolenko, the men went about the company, relating the latest news. On the other side of the Syan, and then Bolyhorod and as far as Krynytsya, the enemy had concentrated over one hundred thousand troops. In the Lyubachiv region, fierce battles were already being waged, the men said. Yesterday the enemy had crossed over near Peremlyshl with a large force, but here it was quiet for some reason. Taking

the mail prepared for them by the quartermaster, the contacts men continued on, probably to the Syanik region.

The detachment spent the second day of Easter on a mountain covered by pretty foliage. Dining on the eggs, sausage, and Easter bread presented to them yesterday, they set out after dinner for the village of Rybne.

Marching along the path in the fields, the insurgents admired the beautiful greenery. On the right side grew dark green sweet-smelling clover and on the left, knee-length wheat of a lighter shade of green. The larks, as if suspended in the sky, sang, each one better than the other. Up front on both sides of the stream the houses of Rybne could be seen. They had evenly trimmed thatched roofs, some with old wheels covered by huge stork nests. Seeing a long file of insurgents, a stork that was quietly resting on one of his long legs rose quickly, beating the air with his large wings, and began to fly over the village.

Every fourth or fifth house was covered by zinc plate. All houses were painted with white lime mixed with blueing. On almost all homesteads, the house, barn, and stable were surrounded by a tall twig fence. At that time there were hardly any young men in the village, just older people and girls.

Seeing the company march to the village, the girls became very happy. About twenty of them gathered in a group and, running from house to house, made plans for something.

The company often stayed in Rubne, possibly because a pretty former student lived here and the staff always stayed at her house. The commander often sat with her on a bench under a willow tree overlooking the river. Also Platoon Commander Zaliznyak enjoyed her company.

The company approached the village. The patrol checked to see if everything was quiet in the village and the detachment marched on along the deep road. Suddenly there occurred an unexpected ambush. From a two-metre embankment, which was hard to climb, the attack began. The "enemy" were the local girls. They were well prepared, having many wooden buckets and tin pails with water. Allowing the patrol and the horse on which Rifleman Pavuk was riding go by, they began their assault with Commander Hromenko himself, pouring a bucket of water over him. This action was begun by the leader of the "shock" troops, Katrusya. Following her example,

a whole series of water pails was emptied on the heads of the insurgents. Here defence was impossible, except for running forward or back. And this is exactly what happened. Some ran forward, others backward, and the unit was in such a state of confusion as had never occurred in even the fiercest battles.

At last, after climbing over the banks, the insurgents began to chase the "enemy," which was not so easy. The soldiers, wearing boots and loaded down with grenades, weapons, and ammunition, wanted to catch the girls, who were light as a breeze. At first the chase took place in the orchards and then extended into the field. Only after Katrusya was exhausted by her own laughter to the point where she could not take another step did she fall into insurgent captivity. The insurgents led her to the yard in front of some house and held a "trial." She was held by the hands by the well; somebody tied a rope around her slender waist and they began to lower her into the well. Katrusya was waving her hands and kicking the cement sides but the two soldiers were mercilessly turning the crank and lowering her into the water. Her skirt was already swimming in the water. Now the crank was being turned both ways. She was being pulled out of the water and then lowered again, chest deep. If it were not for Medical Assistant Zirka, she would have been kept in the water longer, but Zirka pointed out to the soldiers the danger of the cold water and Katrusya was immediately brought up. On the ground Katrusya ground her teeth but could not stop laughing. She was asked by Rifleman Pavuk, "Can one still take a drink of water from that well?"

The evening was approaching. Today the cooks did not cook any supper, for this village was rather well-to-do and the people were very hospitable. At night the girls from Yavirnyk Ruskyi, which almost joined Rybne, also came and joined in the fun.

After supper the insurgents strolled in the sweet-smelling and blossoming orchard. Katrusya was also there, wearing a warm coat, and Medical Assistant Zirka was giving her an aspirin from his medicine bag. Rifleman Pavuk was always saying that Zirka's entire medicine supply consisted of aspirin and anti-lice powder. And now Pavuk reminded the medical assistant, "Comrade, don't give Katrusya the powder instead of the aspirin."

The insurgents stood around with the girls in the midst of the orchards. Some joked, others sang. When the men were singing with girls the songs were heartening and cheerful, but when the men sang alone, the songs were much more subdued. The local insurgents with their girls were much happier at this moment, but the soldiers from other regions were in a sad mood, for they were remembering the "good old days" and were homesick for their families and sweethearts.

At the time when the men from Hromenko's company were merrymaking — and the sprinkling with water lasted way into the night — a bit farther up a group of people were sitting on a broad bench beside the house. This group included older peasants, several company officers, and an elderly professor and his wife, a native of the Vynnytsya region. On his way to the West, the professor was overtaken by the Bolsheviks and so he remained in Lemkivshchyna in UPA territory. He was close to seventy, of medium height, with a beard as white as snow. He was very modest, said very little, wrote much, and was often visited by contacts men from the OUN Command. They were all watching the gardens and the street where the insurgents and girls were merrily dancing. Today the professor loosened his tongue and began to talk about the Liberation Struggle, about SUM, SVU, and then about the horrible times endured by Ukraine under Bolshevik-Russian occupation. Later the discussion changed to the topics of the day.

Intelligence brought news from all directions that many enemy units were coming to the Syan. Draft calls were continuing in Poland. The UPA detachments, on this and on the other side of the Curzon line, were engaged in heavy fighting almost daily. Polish street gangs, instigated by even wilder Russian gangs, wanted to destroy the whole Ukrainian nation mercilessly. There were no limits to the baseness of methods used by the enemy in the struggle. They poisoned water, purposely left explosives behind, and spread typhoid and Siberian syphilis.

"I am glad," continued the professor to a group of people, turning his face more often in the direction of the UPA officers, "that I have lived to see these days. When I watch these fighters of ours, who with each passing day restore the honour of our Ukraine in such a hard time, I compare this with the time of the Liberation Struggle, when Col. Konova-

lets and others had to organize our army illegally, in opposition to the decisions of the government of that time."

He was interrupted by a question from one of the UPA officers: "Professor, what is your opinion about the present struggle?" "Sir," continued the professor, "if the West did not have such stupid politicians as Chamberlain, Hitler, Roosevelt and Co., UPA chances would have been much better, and as far as the UPA command is concerned. I have nothing but praise. Let's take the establishment of the Ukrainian Supreme Liberation Council, for example. The UPA command has no opposition to this. The OUN leadership has behind it years of experience in the struggle and in administration, but in order to give everyone a chance to participate in the struggle, even such young revolutionaries as myself," he said pointing to his beard with a smile, "this institution was created. Or let's take the ABN. What a good approach to the matter. We are not alone in our struggle; with us are other subjugated peoples, and not only organizationally; detachments of other nationalities are also actively fighting side by side with the UPA units."

A scout approached the group. He had just left the headquarters of Com. Hromenko and was now relating the news to the group of people outside the house.

"Large numbers of enemy troops have come to Peremyshl, Dyniv, and Syanik, as well as other enemy bases. All trains are catering solely to the Polish army. Large-scale mobilization has been ordered in Poland."

The group of people came closer to the scout in order to hear him better, for he had been drowned out by the singing of a nearby group of girls and insurgents, who were singing rather loudly, "Quietly, quietly the wind is blowing in the field."

The news which the UPA intelligence brought was quite alarming. Listening to it, the group immediately changed the tone of the discussion. An elderly woman wrung her hands and said, "Oh God, oh God! What are we going to do now! Those bandits are going to kill us all!"

"Why are you lamenting, old woman?" asked her husband. "Our units are here. They have been defending us for years and are going to continue to do so."

"But haven't you heard how many of them are coming with tanks and cannons?"

"So what? Is it the first time?"

Another woman said to her husband, "Peter, I am going to tie a few things together; perhaps tomorrow we will have to go in the woods."

This idea was soon picked up by almost all the women in the group and they left for their own homes, to get ready for an uncertain tomorrow.

The conversation outside the house continued and became louder, for it had to compete with the songs of the insurgents and the girls. Com. Hromenko and Dr. Shuvar now joined the singers. Finishing the song, "The evening is falling," they continued with "At the edge of the forest..." then "The rifleman said goodbye"... and finally, "Let the earth be plowed by cannon."

Stefan Plotnyy, who a few minutes before had been reassuring his wife with such authority, turned to instructor Zoryan just after she left and asked, "What do you think, how long can we hold out?"

Instead of answering, Zorian himself asked a question. "And what do you think is better? For the company to leave this region or to fight the enemy here?"

"Where? Why retreat? Fight the snakes to the end!" said Stefan Plotnyy, clenching his fists.

This reply pleased instructor Zoryan very much. Zoryan was always gentle and quiet and was greatly respected by the people as well as the soldiers. Then he continued, "We all know that we cannot establish the Free Ukraine now, but we have already won this uneven fight. By this uncompromising struggle we are training a new man, a free man, a hero, a knight. Thanks to this struggle, slavery and servitude are disappearing among us with each passing day. Each day there are more people who are ready to sacrifice their lives for their people and for our state. We are well aware of what is going on in the area and how many enemy troops are here. Many of us are not going to be among the living in a few days' time, for we are going to fall in battle, but look at them now," Zoryan pointed to a group of singing insurgents who were now singing a cheerful "kolomyyka" while Dr. Shuvar was conducting, adding after each stanza the refrain "oi, tai

duna, duna . . ." and from time to time pointing to an insurgent or a girl as they began a new stanza of the song.

"Are they worried about it? They'd rather live a day in freedom, than an age in slavery."

It was late in the evening, and the people began to go home. Before leaving, one woman turned to her husband.

"Come Ivan! Today we have to bury a sack of grain and let's give our steer to the company, or else the Poles will take it." Ivan nodded his head in agreement, went to the company supply sergeant, then took his wife home.



CHAPTER TWENTY SIX

The second day of Easter was coming to an end. The evening was bright and warm. Many insurgents spread out canvas on the ground and went to sleep outside in the gardens. They were lulled to sleep by the croaking of frogs and the singing of the nightingale in the bushes by the creek.

In a few hours' time the guards were waking the cooks in order for them to cook dinner and coffee for breakfast. From the direction of the Syan, five kilometres away, one could hear the sound of tanks and trucks. A scout riding on horseback went straight to the captain's quarters, reporting that large units of enemy troops with tanks and artillery were crossing the Syan. All villages were placed on alert. Civilian, medical, and supply units entered the camouflaged bunkers, taking with them all literature and anything that might look

suspicious. In other words, the whole region was placed on the alert.

The company marched toward the forest to take up the same positions as yesterday. Along the way Commander Lahidnyy said that never in his life would he go into an underground bunker and that he did not envy those units which could not defend themselves successfully but were forced to go underground. Commander Lahidnyy knew what he was talking about. Once he had been forced to fight his way out of a bunker that had been discovered by the enemy. This struggle lasted for several hours and a dozen or so insurgents lost their lives as a result. Only quick orientation and great courage saved his life. For this action the UPA command awarded him a gold medal of military merit!

The company reached the forest, and a secret march was ordered. The last soldier dragged a large branch behind him to rub out all the tracks. To adhere to the rules of secrecy in the forest, where the civilian population rarely ventured, was not an easy matter. A broken branch, a bent blade of grass, disturbed rotten leaves, or a discarded cigarette butt or match could betray the presence of the detachment.

Having good intelligence information about the huge enemy forces, the UPA detachments were forced to change their tactics. Some commanders themselves developed better methods of attack, retreat, and defence but in the majority of cases guerrilla tactics were ordered from the UPA headquarters. Often, a tactic previously used with success by some commander was recorded, developed, and sent out to various companies in a tactical circular.

Today was the third day of Easter. Hromenko's company camped in the same spot for the second day. Patrols went to the edge of the forest, while guards were stationed close to the company. The soldiers joked about the last two days of the holidays, recalling Katrusya in the well.

A large number of enemy troops converged on the area. Among them one could hear the "elder brother" and his Russian language. They moved slowly toward the villages in which they began to position the artillery and shell the woods. Two small Soviet planes appeared over the woods, dropping leaflets for the UPA detachments. These leaflets written in a mixed Ukrainian and Russian, promised amnesty to the men and death to the commanders and those who refuse to

submit. Others described the "happy" life in Ukraine and reminded the men of the hardships and sufferings in the forest. In case of rejection of this offer, they said a terrible punishment would await them all.

Making a cigarette out of one of the leaflets and Soviet tobacco, Kohut said, "Couldn't those idiots drop better quality paper?"

New enemy forces now launched an assault against the Ukrainian peasants. They broke into pantries, smashed closets, chests, and stoves. They even tore off flooring, while the Ukrainians were singing at that time, "... they are going into the pantry, smashing old chests looking for Bandera."

They raped many women and girls, arrested many Ukrainians, and tortured them in order to get valuable information. But the people, after years of fierce struggle, were well-conditioned.

In underground bunkers in these villages lived many revolutionaries and several wounded. There was an underground printing shop and various magazines but there were no instances of betrayal. Advisers from Moscow, however, pressured Polish officers to attack the forest. It often happened that a large enemy raiding party crossed the whole forest and did not see anybody there. Often during such raids the company left a rotten stump in the fire on purpose and it smouldered all day. Seeing smoke, the enemy directed its artillery fire there or surrounded the forest and advanced toward the place. Today things looked a bit different. Two regiments had surrounded the Dylyahivskyy woods in which Hromenko's company was camping. From all sides of the forest the patrols were bringing the same news: a large enemy force was attacking the forest.

Had it been dinner time it would have been possible to engage the enemy in a fight for several hours and to retreat in the evening, but it was only nine o'clock in the morning. The captain, up above, was slowly pacing the ground, smoking a cigarette and thinking feverishly. The soldiers watched the commander and waited.

"I wouldn't like to be in his shoes," remarked Chumak.

"Comrade Zaliznyak," called Hromenko to the platoon commander. "Assemble all officers and junior officers." In several minutes the captain was addressing them, "Comrades, today we are employing circular defence and are fighting our

way out of it. The enemy should not notice us until we are no farther away than several steps. We do not have to entrench ourselves, only to camouflage ourselves well. We will take up fighting positions there on the hill. Should the enemy notice our detachments at the distance of three or four hundred steps, he will lie low, form three defence lines, and we could be destroyed by mortar fire, while a breakthrough through their lines could cost many lives."

The company assumed a circular defence position, one soldier no farther than three steps away from another. Each was very well masked by the bushes, many of which were growing on this hill. On one side there was a sharp drop to the stream. Here large beech trees predominated, with birches, hazelnut, pines, and aspen, which were now fluttering their leaves as if feeling the impending danger. The ground was covered with dry leaves and sticks. The forefield could be seen well and for some distance. One could not hope for a better defensive position.

Entering the forest, the enemy began to shell it to get more courage, and the fire was answered by other enemy units around the forest. Hearing shots, the insurgents knew where the enemy was the closest, for this was the section where they would make their breakthrough. Therefore this section of the circular position was reinforced.

The Polish "hurray" mixed with the Russian "urrah" could be heard from a distance of several kilometres. Walking for about twenty minutes without encountering any resistance, the enemy forces were gaining confidence. Their shouts were decreasing and the shots becoming less frequent. Many of them were probably going to battle for the first time. After hearing terrible stories about some of the Banderite UPA, they had to be urged on by their politicians to go into the forest. Crossing a large segment of the forest in half an hour and not seeing even a rabbit, the enemy gained even more assurance, but the alertness of the men was decreasing, all the more so because their circle was getting smaller and at the same time denser. The shots could be heard quite near. The well concealed insurgents were lying down, as though glued to the ground. The weapons of each were released to avoid any clanging later on. The insurgents were viewing their forefield and waiting for the enemy. Now they had to be extremely careful so as not to betray themselves prematurely.

Strained nerves could pull the trigger and one careless shot could cost many lives.

The enemy column was moving among the trees at a distance.

Outwardly neither the commanders nor the rank-and-file showed any fear, but human life, especially when death is approaching, was very precious and even the most thoroughly conditioned soldiers showed strain. The men were aware of the situation in which the company found itself today and to break through would require many sacrifices, but nobody knew how great. Again each insurgent was recalling his life up to the present day.

"The devil take it!" thought Chumak almost out loud. "What's the difference, today or tomorrow! And what about the future?" he asked himself. "If we had defended our state better yesterday, instead of sending children to Kruty, our situation would have looked different today," and his thoughts flew over the pages of history. "Or had it been different in the times of Hetman Mazepa? The tsar managed to bring his semi-barbaric Russians as far as Poltava and we only put up six thousand of our defenders." His thoughts wandered again.

"I wonder why the ideas of Dontsov or Mikhnovskyy did not have popular acceptance and why our government was dominated by weak individuals who, instead of supporting the organization and mobilization of the army, combatted it? I wonder what these people are doing abroad at this moment? Today they probably have changed their minds."

Muscles and nerves became more and more strained. The careless and unprofessional approach of the enemy could be heard coming closer and closer. The enemy was perhaps sixty or seventy steps away. "Walk faster, devils, so that we can begin sooner!" The ring of death was closing in. Thirty, twenty steps, but none of the insurgents even moved a finger. The captain was lying behind a bush by Loza's squad.

Loza looked at the commander questioningly. "Why don't we hit?"

"Not yet!" Hromenko shook his head lightly in reply.

Who was this commander? What was his real name and where did he come from? Today he had again taken up a position in the most dangerous spot. He had been commanding this company for years, yet the men knew so little about him.

They were concerned about his life, for his loss would weaken the fighting condition of the company and would constitute a most painful loss. He often said, "Let us fight as one body but each must think. Don't be submissive lambs but rough revolutionaries. Remember that in battle even a stranded two- or three-man group must constitute an independent fighting unit. When you don't know how to think you will find it hard to get out of a hard situation."

Could one imagine a better general for the Ukrainian army than he? At a time when the men knew nothing about his civilian past, the list of his military experiences was known to many. He had behind him the military section of OUN, the legion of Shukhevych, the battles in Polissya, and now five years of command in the most cruel struggle in the history of the Ukrainian army. Is not all this the best military academy which an officer can attend? Let's take today, for example. The numerical superiority of the enemy was approximately twenty to one, with good provisioning in each field. Only in two respects was the UPA detachment superior to the enemy: first, in military training and guerrilla experience, and second, in its great idealism.

The captain took up a position near the machine-gun team of machine-gunner Dub (oak tree). As his name suggested, he was a robust and strong lad. While walking, he swayed sideways with each step and even though he was twenty-four years old he looked like a teenager. He had a German-made machine-gun MG-42 which fired very quickly. When firing a good round from this machine-gun it was possible to fell a large tree. At the end of its barrel several ferns were now "growing," which had been recently planted there by the machine-gunner.

The enemy column halted for a moment. Some officer was shouting something into the field radio and again a command: "Forward!"

The insurgents in this section could see the enemy faces quite clearly. Some were frightened, others, after one and a half hour's march through the forest, seemed confident that nobody was to be found here. Then, at a distance of no more than five steps, they saw the insurgents with barrels directed at them and halted as if paralyzed. Someone shouted "Banderites!" and at this shout, as if on orders, the insurgents began to fire. The first shots were fired by the squads of Loza and

Rubach and they were supported by the entire company. Blond, handsome Rubach, serious and with good military training, maintained strict discipline in his squad. He was always successful in two fields: in the villages he was chased by pretty girls and in battle he was always given the hardest assignments, but he managed to do everything quite well. Thus today, his squad was the first to fire and the barrels of their automatics had not stopped spouting bullets. Up front a dozen or so enemy dead were already lying about and the ring of death had been broken. Now the enemy line remained only along the sides of the company's defensive position.

The company's left flank had already opened fire on the enemy from the left side, and the right flank was doing the same thing on the right. Terrible panic broke out in the midst of the enemy ranks. A segment of the enemy ring, which was still some distance away from the company, opened heavy fire and began to shout. But it was different in the area where the company was breaking through. Some of the enemy were lying peacefully, others were running in panic, leaving behind the military equipment and the wounded. The brave Communists of yesterday were now crying and imploring God and mother for help.

Now the company, in a spread-out position, moved east, ready at a moment's notice to engage in battle if it came across enemy troops. Then it turned right in a semi-circle. An order went down the line: "Conceal all tracks and move on slowly!" Making a rather large semicircle, the company approached the area from which enemy shouts and shots were coming. This was done on purpose since in case of another attack the enemy troops were going to go in the direction in which the UPA detachment retreated, for it would never occur to the enemy that instead of retreating further the company was going to come closer and again take up a good circular defence position on the hill which they had recently crossed. Scouts and patrols were posted and the company now quietly rested in a new fighting position.

The circular defence and breakthrough tactic was used by the company for the first time today. This was an unusually successful tactic, as today's battle had shown. Instructor Zoryan now explained the advantages of today's fight.

"Imagine, for example, that we had opened fire at the enemy at a distance of two or three hundred steps. What state

would we be in now? The enemy would have assumed a strong defensive position and we would have had to attack him and break through. How many casualties would we have had then? I still can't believe that, after being surrounded as we were, we came out without even one wounded."

Listening from a distance to Zoryan's explanations, Kohut, who had been squatting on the ground, contradicted him, but so that the latter could not hear him, of course. "That one is carrying on big propaganda. It's not true that there were no losses, for I myself have lost two buttons and a heel from my boot." Kohut took off his boot several times and did not know how to fix it. Always very inventive, Kohut now had a problem.

"I wonder what the enemy losses were?" asked somebody in the group.

"Between forty and fifty," answered Imennyi.

"No, many more!" maintained Bartel and Kalyna. "For we broke through a ring of two hundred metres," insisted Bartel.

"Take three metres for a person and figure it out," replied Imennyi. "We did not shoot all who were in this section," said Imennyi. "Many of them were lying with their heads in the grass like ostriches, out of fear, but perhaps there were more than forty," Imennyi upped his estimate... "Oh, well, go and count them," he joked.

The distance between the hill which the company occupied now and the hill where the breakthrough occurred was not very great. Shots and screams were coming from that direction now. The detachment was ready to start fighting any moment and was lying in its military positions. Although the evening was still far off and it might be necessary to fight again, the insurgents were nevertheless in good spirits and proud of today's successful action. One could not speak of a strong enemy attack. The blow which they received was so strong that their attack would have broken down in several minutes and, what is more, if today were the first battle for this particular enemy unit, then it was best to pull it out completely from military positions or even to disband it. This philosophy was best explained by Pavuk to Kohut.

"When you harness a young horse to a heavy wagon for the first time," said Pavuk, "you are going to ruin him for life. Or take a young dog, for instance, and try to teach him to watch the house, and the neighbour, instead of teasing him

lightly, is going to hit him with a flail. Then what do you think is going to happen to him?"

"So you are saying that today we have spoiled those 'Anteks'? Isn't that a shame," added Kohut.

The sun was already reaching the top of a tall fir. Enemy trucks were roaring on village roads and several houses were burning. Large columns of smoke rose high up into the sky. Last winter the enemy burned down a dozen or so villages, but this was done during sneak attacks. After setting the house ablaze, the enemy units quickly retreated out of fear of UPA detachments. Thus in the fourth district the following villages were burned: Pyatkova, Zhohatyn, Kotiv, Yavirnyk Rusky, and Volya Volodzhska. Similarly, the enemy burned villages in other districts. The peasants managed to extinguish the fire in several houses. In some villages, only a few houses remained intact but the peasants were hardened by now and very dedicated to the cause and they helped each other. Often three or four families lived in one house while others dug underground shelters or moved to cellars. In the villages which were situated closer to the woods, many more houses remained, for the enemy ventured there less frequently and the UPA detachments which camped in the vicinity drove the enemy away and helped to extinguish the burning houses.

But today the situation was completely different. It was no use talking about extinguishing fires and driving away the enemy, for there were thousands of them there. This troubled the insurgents very much. They realized that the situation had changed and that now they could only engage in defensive actions. Since the time of the first deportation action, the enemy units did not dare to stay overnight in these villages. Today, however, because of their large numbers they occupied one of them and sent out strong outposts and spent the night in them. UPA detachments continued to have access to other villages, often spending the night in the neighbouring villages near the enemy, and machine-gun teams were at times only several hundred steps from enemy outposts. The peasants, who had enjoyed almost two years of independence, were defending themselves by all means. At times enemy units were quartering in some village for several days, while in underground bunkers underground work of care for the wounded went on undisturbed. In spite of enemy interrogations, bribery and tortures, there were no instances of betrayal

of such a bunker. Often a group of peasants, seeing that the enemy was approaching, fled to the woods with children, cattle, and small bundles and camped there by the streams for several days at a time. Before the arrival of the enemy almost all men ran to the forest or hid in hideouts. This state of affairs made UPA members even more courageous and at times they undertook the most dangerous feats.



CHAPTER TWENTY SEVEN

Two days after the breakthrough from the encirclement in Dylyahivskyy forest, the company camped in a small wood overlooking the village of Rybne. Kalyna's squad was posted at the edge of the forest to watch the movements of enemy troops. The enemy units were approaching the village and the peasants began to flee into the woods. Some woman, carrying a child in her arms and a heavy bundle on her back and dragging a cow behind her, was running last. Seeing this, the enemy detachment began to chase her and to shoot. The poor woman often fell, then got up again, hit the cow with the end of the rope, not wishing to leave her behind for the enemy, and continued to head for the forest. The distance to the forest was not great, but the poor thing was out of breath and fell every two or three steps since she found it rather

hard to get up with a heavy bundle on her back. The bandits came closer and closer. Watching this terrible picture, the blood turned cold in the veins of the men in Kalyna's squad, but they could not open fire for the terrorized woman with the baby was between them and the enemy. The bandits were only about a hundred steps away from the woman and they were screaming wildly, "Halt! Halt! Halt!"

Hearing loud voices close behind her, the woman gathered all her strength and began to run as fast as possible and the cow, frightened by shots broke loose and ran to the edge of the forest. At that moment the enemy bullet hit the woman and she fell to the ground together with the baby crying loudly. Now the insurgents' nerves could not hold out any longer and squad leader Kalyna gave the command in a loud voice, "F o r w a r d!"

He was a native of the neighbouring village Yaseniv, which was adjacent to Rybne, and knew the woman well. The squad ran out into the clearing and began to shoot at the enemy. Across the clearing, in the village, several hundred enemy troops were watching the chase of their unit into the forest. And suddenly they were attacked by the insurgents, and with such a decisive blow. The enemy unit in the clearing did not resist but fled in panic. This created confusion among the troops in the village as well, and they began to retreat. The group of insurgents chased the bandits, cutting down several in the clearing but then remembering that there were only thirteen of them, they turned to the stream and followed it to the forest, taking the woman, wounded in the leg, with them along the way.

The situation of the UPA detachments was becoming harder and harder. Now they were often short of food, medicine, underwear, and other necessities. Battles and clashes with the enemy were the order of the day, and sometimes even several times daily, but the military preparedness and the morale of the company continued to be good. And although the situation of the UPA detachments was worse than before and the contacts with headquarters much harder to maintain while the soldiers died each day, they were nevertheless well armed, continued to engage in successful fights, and the enemy was still terribly frightened of them. A much harder struggle was waged by the civilian population. They had to undergo enemy tortures and frequent executions, but in spite of this

they cooperated with UPA detachments and all sections of the revolutionary underground even more persistently.

"If all the people of Ukraine were as dedicated to our cause as our Lemkivshchyna, which until recently was not even nationally conscious, we could drive the enemy out of Ukraine, no matter how strong he was," insisted Father Kadylo.

"Yes, Father," confirmed Chumak in complete agreement.

More and more enemy troops were coming to this area. To give at least a day of rest to the company, commander Hromenko took the company across the Syan and brought it to the Varskyy forest, a completely Polish territory. Finding itself in the forest in the alien and hostile territory at dawn, the company was in good spirits, for it was certain that it was going to spend a peaceful day here. At worst an enemy patrol could pass here or several civilians. "If nobody comes here today," said the commander, "we are going to spend two days here."

Camping on a mountain top, they had a good view of the terrain beyond the Syan, the beautiful Syan, which the UPA detachments had crossed so many times, the village of Volodzh, half burned, then the woods. To the left was the Dylyahivskyy, which today seemed quiet, and to the right the Hrushivskyy which stretched all the way to Kuzmyna. It seems to be very "hot" there today. Artillery shells were exploding there all morning, and the sounds could be heard as far as the Varskyy forest. A black column of smoke rose over the forest with each firing.

After dinner the artillery fire stopped but in half an hour strong machine-gun and rifle fire was heard. At first it concentrated around the forest but then it began to move around in the forest. The men looked through the telescope at the road Selyska-Poruby and saw dozens of trucks and other military vehicles. The shots in the forest behind the village were more and more frequent.

Commander Hromenko followed the progress of the enemy attack on the forest. Watching it in silence for quite a while, he finally said:

"I hope that those sons of the devil won't find our men," meaning those in underground bunkers. All this time Chumak was thinking about the hospital where he had been

and now asked the commander, "Are our men in other bunkers besides that of the hospital?"

The commander shook his head and showed Chumak four finders. Chumak saw from this that there were many bunkers, but he did not know if there were people in them. According to the Commander, our people were still to be found in five bunkers. He should never have asked, thought Chumak, for now he'll have to worry about their safety that much more.

At present the enemy action was quite lively and massive. Chumak compared it with the German-Bolshevik front of 1941. In this region the German troops did not number one-tenth as many as now the Polish and the Russian did. "I wonder how long they are going to stay here? After all, they can't be here longer than several months, for these are detachments of regular army and they can't camp long in forest and fields," thought Chumak.

Commander Hromenko's tactics were very prudent. The enemy was in our district and the UPA were resting in his. The soldiers slept well and felt very sure of themselves, when a guard brought two children, aged about 10. They were not frightened and began to tell Rubakha about their parents, the village police, and about their dogs and cats. They had heard about the Banderites and had seen them as well. They came to their house and their father had to buy something for them in town and also gave them bacon. Rubakha amused the children as well as he could, so as to while away the time until evening. Seeing that the evening was falling, the children remembered that it was time for them to go home. Then they began to cry.

Petya took them by the hand and led them to the edge of the forest and instructed them along the way, "Don't tell anybody that you have seen the Banderites in the forest, but come tomorrow again and we are going to pick berries, and catch squirrels and birds."

In an hour the company returned across the Syan into Hrushivskyy forest. Even though commandant Petya did not count much on the fictitious plan with the children, on the next day Polish artillery turned over the trees in the Varskyy woods.

The losses in personnel were greatly increasing, and the small groups on special assignments suffered the most.

Contacts men, food suppliers, or medical assistants often came across enemy ambushes. Near the village of Bryzhava, comrade Kohut with two riflemen had been sent on a patrol. In the meantime the enemy approached from the opposite direction. The company engaged in a short fight and retreated while Kohut and the others remained on the other side of the enemy and never rejoined the company. Their fate was unknown. With the loss of Kohut, Chumak's squad lost not only a good soldier and patriot but also a good humorist. Petya's SB group also lost several soldiers. In reality his men took care of the most dangerous contacts at present.

On May 22, 1947, the company was stationed in the forest by the village of Netrebka. This forest had been surrounded since morning by the enemy who had found out about the presence of an UPA company in this wood. The enemy began to move cautiously into the middle of the forest, shooting hard and throwing grenades into the thickets. They had been approaching for three hours now and only getting on the insurgents' nerves with their advance. According to reports, the enemy was now paying most attention to each mountain and hill and was capturing them slowly. Hearing about this the captain ordered a change in position. The company came closer to the enemy and took up positions on flat ground just behind a hill. All were well camouflaged. A small Russian plane was circling overhead and dropping leaflets in Ukrainian, as platoon leader Bartel was saying:

"These Communists must continue to take us seriously when they are dropping leaflets in Ukrainian, at a time when the whole administration in Ukraine is being conducted in Russian. And listen how they pity us. They say that we poor slobos don't have food, clothing, or soap, and at the end add that there won't be any war with the USA. They are calling on UPA members not to listen to their commanders but to repent and to live happily in the Soviet Union. And how strange, they want to give the Lemky region to the new Poland while they're offering a happy life to the guerrillas in the Soviet Union under the 'all-just' and good father of the people, Stalin."

The enemy shots were getting closer; the enemy was capturing a hill not far from the company. In this spot the enemy circle was closest to the company. Finding itself in a circle of death, the company nervously waited for the action



to begin. The weapons of each were ready; each had plans of attack ready. In the event that the enemy would engage in battle, the grenades would fall; if not, the soldiers had already figured out how many leaps it would take to this or that tree. This time the enemy moved more cautiously, and judging by its sounds and yells, it was easy to figure out that today the enemy troops were much more numerous. The legs of several enemy soldiers could be seen among the thin bushes at a distance of about fifty steps in the section occupied by Bartel's platoon. They were moving so slowly that each step took several seconds. Although the tactic of the last breakthrough proved very successful, today the insurgents were more tense, for the situation was worse and the enemy was much slower and more cautious. Even though the soldiers who were lying in place and waiting for the terrible fight to begin were well conditioned and had tens of great battles behind them, the lips of each were moving in ardent prayer to God. Here, there were no career men who wanted to gain medals or ranks. These people were shedding blood and giving their young lives for the freedom of their own people in their own land. Often completely obscure, these people never demonstrated their patriotism outwardly, even in the past in civilian life.

When one recalled the pre-war years and the preparatory cadres, it turns out that often those upon whom great hopes were placed, at the mention of the enemy front, had forgotten about their tasks and went abroad. It was true that many of them went upon orders or contacts, but by far not all.

Tensions were rising and at this moment everyone was hoping to live until evening, knowing that at night the enemy was going to leave the forest. But all watch hands stood at high noon and the sun was almost standing still in the sky. Yes, night was the mother of the insurgents, but how many of them were going to see it today? It was almost a certainty that many of the insurgents were not going to see the sunset.

Suddenly a sharp series from a machine-gun pierced the air in the section occupied by Bartel's platoon. It was supported by the whole arsenal of automatics and rifles of the entire company. The detachment rushed forward. Strong fire and shouts of "Glory!" and "Hurray!" were intermixed. A fierce battle ensued and the company attacked. A loud command by commander Hromenko, "Forward!" reminded the men that if they were not going to break through this ring of death with

a severe blow they would all perish. The screams of the wounded were heard on both sides. The first encirclement was broken. The insurgents leapt over the dead and wounded enemy soldiers. A fierce fight with the second enemy line followed. Buk was lying low beside a dead Pole, leaning his sub-machine-gun against him and shooting. Only a moment ago this Sigmund was dangerous but now his dead body was serving as protection. Over thirty enemy corpses were scattered about in the midst of the insurgents. Only several steps away there was a thick enemy line and in the back the curses of some Russians were heard. An "older brother" with an automatic was spurring the Poles to battle and at his side were several devoted Polish henchmen, the Russian janissaries.

The breakthrough was taking rather long. The enemy put up strong resistance and some Poles who had begun to run in panic were stopped by a round from the automatic of the Russian henchman-driver. The situation looked hopeless. Suddenly Com. Hromenko got up and the whole company followed suit and in several seconds hit the enemy with such force and determination that the enemy circle broke and the company crashed through the encirclement. This time five insurgents remained in the forest forever, including a good company administrator. Three lightly wounded men retreated with the company.

Moving a distance through the forest, the company assumed another defensive position, while in the meantime the sun and the watchhands had moved rather far, unnoticed.

Besides the great enemy activity in the forest against the UPA detachments, something terrible was also happening in the villages. The crying of children and women, shots, foul language, the roaring of motors, and the bellows of cattle could be heard all around. The enemy conduct in the villages worried the insurgents very much.

In the evening the company left for the village of Huta. A scouting party reported that not a living soul could be found in the village. Entering the empty village, the soldiers became very depressed. Inside the houses beds were turned upside down, closets were broken open, spoons and bowls were lying on the tables beside an unfinished meal. The enemy must have taken all the inhabitants forcefully, without a moment's notice. The mews of cats and the howling of dogs made the

atmosphere even more depressing. The small supplies of grain and potatoes had been doused with kerosene by the enemy, for they had no time to cart them away. The chickens were roosting on fences and roofs while the cattle had been taken. Only now it became clear why such screams had come from here during the day.

"Oh God! How much revenge is needed here! How base are these brutal Communists who are trying to rebuild the social order in the whole world. The United States with its presidents Roosevelt and then Truman and Co. is no less to blame for these crimes. And this is taking place in the twentieth century in the countries which call themselves Social Democracies. What an irony!"

The company went on to the village of Rybne and here the story was the same. Two old men came out of the forest slowly and began to relate some horrible things. The rounding up of people from the houses by the forest lasted only several minutes. Some people could not even take their underwear, pots and pans, or other necessities with them. The people were loaded into trucks and taken quickly across the Syan to Dyniv. There there was no such great rush anymore. In a clearing behind barbed wire the people waited for several days for their turn in the freight cars which would transport them to the German territories which were annexed by the Polish Communist state after the war.

If some great Western state wanted to resettle 3/4 of a million of its inhabitants in an area 800 miles away, after several months of planning by the Ministry of Transport it would receive a report that this resettlement campaign would cost millions of dollars and take over a year. But "most democratic" Poland with the help of the "older brother" and Ford trucks managed to transport the Lyubachiv, Yaroslav, Peremyshl, and the whole Lemky region in ten days.

Many people tried to flee to the forest. The enemy shot them and then prided itself in its military reports and propaganda as to how many UPA bandits they had annihilated. Many fleeing peasants could be encountered here and there in the woods. They were hiding in the forests, streams, or ravines, as during the Tatar raids in the past. Here and there a cow was tied to a tree, the children were playing by the fire, and adults were thinking that this invasion would pass in several days and they would be able to return to their villages. Many

of them never went farther than the towns of Dyniv or Bircha. Their grandfathers and great-grandfathers lived here and they wanted to live out their days here as well. But the enemy was merciless. Paying no heed to the lamentations of separated families, lost children, or unburied parents, it hunted down everyone and transported the people across the Syan.

After several years of fierce fighting, the enemy began only now to be successful. It was true that they achieved these successes in a very base way, but the enemy was not worried by this, as in the past Russia had not been troubled by the extermination of millions of Ukrainians by artificial famine, by deportation to Siberia, or by execution. The foes knew well that conventional destruction of UPA detachments was not in their power. Therefore they decided upon such ignoble resettlement schemes.

The UPA Command in Zakerzonnya, having good intelligence reports, realized very well what this campaign meant. It scheduled a propaganda raid to the West for some detachments, for others it scheduled transfers to Halychyna. Some small groups were to remain in the depopulated area. Due to the great masses of enemy troops, however, these orders did not reach the men in time, for no doubt some of those who had been carrying the orders had fallen in transit.

Deprived of the population, the members of UPA only now realized that guerilla warfare was not only the struggle of the UPA detachments but also of the Ukrainian people in general. Now they were not only short of food and other supplies but something else was missing in the struggle. The very purpose of the struggle had lost some of its meaning, for even the woods and the villages and the beautiful landscape with its silver-ribboned Syan turned into a desert without the Ukrainian population.

The hardest hit were the UPA hospitals. Some of them were known only to medical detachments, out of which many had perished in the last two weeks. Some recovering wounded men who wanted to establish contacts with UPA detachments were victims of enemy ambushes. The wounded in the hospitals continued to wait for contacts which never came. Some died because of lack of medicine; others starved to death, and some were discovered by the enemy.

The administrative networks of OUN were now next in

line. The hardest tasks were performed by SB units and the field gendarmerie. Their men often had to serve as scouts, maintain contacts, and procure food and ammunition. The UPA detachments were in the best shape so far. Even though they were threatened by starvation and their ranks had thinned out considerably, the company nevertheless constituted a strong military unit, at the mention of which the enemy trembled.

Some food was still stored in warehouses, part had to be procured beyond the Syan, and the remainder could still be found here and there in deserted villages. Many chickens had become wild and were roosting in trees. Semi-wild cattle which had been left behind could easily be caught, other luxuries were also available, but one had to think about them. Rifleman Rubakha was ingenious. He was the oldest soldier in Hromenko's company, a native of Kolomyia region, a good marksman, who looked more like a rich German farmer than an insurgent, always cheerful and loved by women. In the past he always had a bag filled with all sorts of goodies. Several months ago one pretty woman gave birth to twins and Com. Hromenko found out that Rubakha was their father. Such incidents were unusually rare. When the commander wanted to punish the 45-year-old Rubakha, the woman declared that it was all her fault. This was confirmed by Rubakha and he escaped punishment.

This same shrewd Rubakha saw several beehives in the orchard and he began to itch for the honey. The farmstead was overgrown with grass and the owner was somewhere in the West, but the bees worked diligently, paying no attention to the grim surroundings. Rubakha opened the hive and took out almost a whole frame of honey. But the bees defended their property, just as the Ukrainians were now defending theirs, and declared a fierce war on Rubakha. Defending his booty, he ran with it into the bushes. For the next several days poor Rubakha had to open his swollen eyes with his fingers, and for several days he was the subject of jokes of the whole company.



CHAPTER TWENTY EIGHT

The enemy troops continued to stream into the Lemky region. Their number had gone beyond 100,000 and their base and cruel tactics were now double-pronged. Some enemy detachments crossed the woods daily, while others manned outposts and ambushes in the woods, along roads, and in villages. Having no experience in guerrilla warfare, often they fought themselves. The enemy tactic of laying siege to the UPA detachments, although it looked terrible, brought greater losses to the enemy than to the UPA detachments. The second enemy tactic, however, was becoming more irritating to the UPA detachments and the contacts men. The enemy had large armed forces at its disposal, which at times were stationed for weeks at all possible roads, clearings, and paths. This restricted the maneuverability which the UPA detach-

ments had enjoyed not so long ago. Now it was necessary to engage in several fights daily while marching from one place to another or from one forest to another.

When the initiative was taken away from the insurgents in their own forest, it had a very negative effect on the soldiers, and they feared that their company would not last for more than several days. Another thing which had a bad influence on the men was the presence of their wounded, for whom no safe place could any longer be found. They had to go along with the company and the more severely wounded had to be carried. Medicines, bandages, and food were now scarce. A meal once every two days became the order of the day. Although exhausted by hunger and battles, the insurgents were forced to carry a double supply of ammunition.

Remarching into a small wood overlooking the village of Dobryanka, the company assumed a good defensive position on top of a hill and began to camp there. This wood surrounded the village of Lyakhova and joined the large Kuzminskyy forest. Quartermaster Sokolenko sent several soldiers to the deserted houses to search for food. One had to be very careful, for the enemy was stationed in almost every village and settlement. Bags were being filled with almost anything which could serve as food: a bit of grain, oats mixed with wheat, swept from the corners of bins, several potatoes, a beet, a carrot, or a piece of moldy bread. This mixture, spread on a piece of canvas, was divided by administrator Hupalo and placed straight into the squad pots, after he made sure that not a single grain fell outside the canvas.

In a deep, well-masked stream, the fires were burning and the pap, as someone had called this mess, was cooking. It was later divided, along with overcooked potatoes and undercooked grain, among the soldiers, and it seemed to quiet their upset stomachs. The previous discussions about pretty girls, dances, or politics, had now changed to talk of white bread, milk, and meat. Pavuk recalled the smoked bacon which had hung on a peg in his pantry. Several calories in the stomach not only had to satisfy the hunger but had to provide physical strength for the following day. The fresh forest air, the cold mountain water and the youth of the insurgents increased their appetite, as if in spite.

June 1, 1947, promised to be a beautiful day. The cooks had extinguished the fires, dawn was breaking in the east, and

half of the huge sun showed itself. The birds were also beginning their carefree day. Some built nests, others fed their screaming young. The insurgents, however, were just beginning their night, covering themselves with the beautiful rays of the sun. Outposts, patrols, and guards protected their comrades. On that day Chumak had duty with the company. Changing and checking the guards, he returned to the spot where the company was stationed. All were asleep except for instructor Zoryan who was looking for something among his papers and Com. Hromenko who, placing a small mirror on a bent tree, was shaving with a dull razor.

The two were engaged in conversation. Zoryan was speaking now. "In this condition, a propaganda raid? Had this order reached us three weeks ago, when we looked human, but today . . ."

"I am most worried about the wounded," interrupted Com. Hromenko. "We will find it very hard to get to the border."

Chumak took off his boots and began to dry his socks in the sun, which were drenched by the dew through holes in the boots. The discussion which he had just heard, although not completely comprehensible, was nevertheless very interesting. The company was sleeping in a position of circular defence and the remainder of the staff was in the middle. The captain looked around to see if anybody else was listening and then looked at Chumak, raised his finger to his lips, and let out a cautionary "p s s s t", thus warning him not to say a word about it to anyone. Then he went on.

"We don't have to worry about that. We can get by in Polish, Hungarian, or Czech uniforms, but the question is, how many will make it?"

Although this discussion was unusually interesting and Chumak was glad to enjoy the confidence of his superiors, he succumbed to the idea that it was better not to know fully about these fantastic plans. He went aside, woke squad leader Chornyy, handed over the duty to him, and himself went to sleep.

But the discussion which he just heard, although so far it had neither a beginning nor an end, prevented his falling asleep. "We can get by in Polish, Hungarian, or Czech uniforms . . . Some order . . . Get where?" Yesterday he had found a Polish newspaper in the forest. It told of the great work of the newly created United Nations. In another place

there was something about the great injustice committed by the Western capitalists toward their population and the arrests of Negroes by their colonists; the terrible wrong committed by Western capitalists against which democratic Communism was fighting at the forum of the United Nations. "But do these United Nations know what is presently happening in Ukraine? Do they know what kind of war was declared by Communist Poland and her neighbours on the Ukrainian population?" Such thoughts in no case permitted the weary Chumak to fall asleep. "Let's take the Lemky region, for example. First it was destroyed by the Germans, half of its youth was deported to work in Germany and its intelligentsia arrested. Then the Red Army plundered it in passing, forcefully taking many of the young boys to its regiments. Then again the Polish bands, and now the entire state apparatus with a large number of its divisions, was completely destroying this beautiful part of Ukraine and its inhabitants." Although Chumak did not know what would be better, he nevertheless hoped that this red line on the map of present-day Poland would pass through Zbruch and beyond Khust. Then Communist Poland would now be defending Cracow and Warsaw and would not be on a spree in the forest of Lemkivshchyna. On the other hand, how proud he was of his comrades and of the whole Liberation Movement. How many divisions had to be brought in by the enemy to combat them!

Now he recalled the words of his father, who often told him, "Son, when you're going to experience what I have been through, you'll talk differently. I had been in the front lines three times, and once it almost came to an attack . . . I had been in the Petlyura Army for three months as well. There was confusion and I went home."

"I wonder where my father is now? Is he still alive?" thought Chumak. "How I would like to talk to him now. And mother?" She often hid Chumak's pistol, holding it with two fingers and saying to him, "Son, are you crazy! Do you know what you can get for this?" And with these thoughts Chumak fell asleep.

He was awakened by a plane circling over the forest. The day was quiet and the insurgents were walking around their fighting positions, picking mushrooms, and eating them raw. The captain turned to duty officer Chornyy, telling him to make sure that the patrols were watching carefully, for here

some contacts men were expected. "It means that we are waiting for somebody — and then this raid," thought Chumak.

In the evening the cooks were again boiling water to which they added the few remaining grains as if for magic. Now they also began to beg for that herb called Indian tobacco. Asking the thrifty Pavuk for leaves, one often lost all desire to smoke. And the latter always repeated, "If you were poor at home, then you'll remain poor with the UPA," and at the same time demonstratively rolled a small cigar, wrapping the cut roots and leaves into a nice leaf.

Great enemy movement was heard all around, but here in the forest it was as quiet as if the company had a day of rest. Another beautiful June night in the same spot, which was an exception at such a dangerous time. The men slept on pine needles, leaves, or grass. It seemed that this spot had been agreed upon when they were not moving somewhere else. Near the stream a large fire could be seen, and many insurgents besides the cooks were milling about. Having slept during the day, they did not feel like sleeping now and besides, they were bothered by irritating hunger. Some found all kinds of mushrooms and cooked them in mess-tins over the fire.

A reconnaissance plane could be heard over the forest. The insurgents began to extinguish the fire quickly, carrying water from the stream. Some said that the enemy did not notice the fire, others thought otherwise.

In the morning battalion commander Bayda, the captain, and the rest of the staff held a meeting. Near the stump on which rifleman Moroz was sitting stood the tall battalion dentist Zubenko, holding dental pincers in his hand. Formerly a handsome and well-dressed dentist from Dyniv, he was now unshaved and as thin as a finger, so that one wondered how his pants could stay on. He was now ready to pull a tooth. Moroz mumbled something, pointing to the aching tooth in his mouth. A group of insurgents stood around teasing Moroz. Without any anesthesia, dentist Zubenko began to pull the tooth. Medical assistant Zirka held Moroz by the head but Moroz's tooth was as firm as the stump upon which he was sitting and did not want to give way. Tears mixed with sweat were rolling from Moroz's eyes, dentist Zubenko also began to sweat, but the tooth wouldn't budge.

"What do you have, horse teeth?" asked Zubenko. Moroz

was holding on to the sides of the stump. Now Pavuk was advising Zubenko:

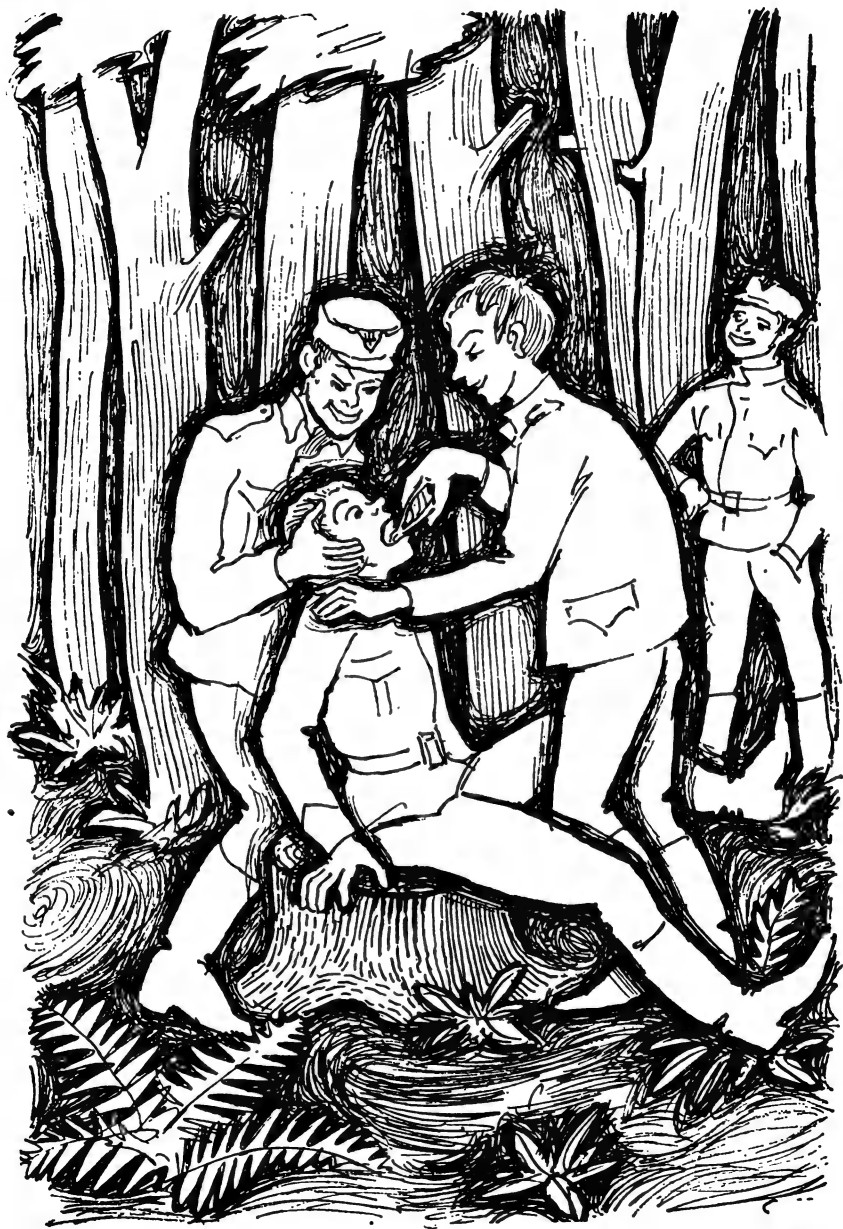
"Doctor, why don't you put a large stone inside your pants for balance and weight." In spite of the fact that Moroz was suffering terrible pain, the men laughed without stopping. Pavuk was already betting somebody a cigar that the tooth and not Zubenko would win. But the doctor did not give up. He took Moroz's head under his arm and pulled out the tooth by force. In a minute's time, Moroz, stuttering without his tooth, was joking, "Doctor, don't you have a shot of whiskey somewhere for disinfection?"

Several minutes later an enemy plane appeared again over the forest, and this time it was clear that the enemy knew about the company's presence here. The men were put on strict alert. From all sides the patrols reported about the gathering enemy attack on the company. But this time the company's defensive position was different. It was camping in a much smaller forest at the very edge.

A significant part of the enemy took up a position in the open field, and other detachments attacked the company in a semi-circle of three rows. To retreat through the open field to a large forest would have been insane, but fighting their way through three enemy columns did not look any better.

The company advanced slowly at arms' distance and after making about 200 steps stopped under a rather steep and high bank behind a small stream. Enemy footsteps could be heard on the hill beyond the stream. A slight motion by the commander, with his hand down, went down the line and the detachment lay down amidst thin bushes as if dead. In another ten seconds they would have been in better position on top of the hill. Here it was terrible. The shooting range was only about twenty steps and should the enemy take up positions on the hill and shower the company with grenades, the whole detachment would perish. But there was no other choice. The men were perhaps more frightened of this unfavourable position than of the enemy, who was advancing in a different manner than before. They did not shoot but approached quietly, wishing to surprise the company. Everybody wondered why the commander had made such a decision, leaving such a good fighting position. Chumak, however, agreed with the commander. This was a good tactic but very dangerous.

The first enemy column showed itself on the bank across



the stream, standing behind trees and looking across the valley at the hill where the company had been camping only a few minutes ago. There on a branch somebody's socks were hanging. Turning slightly to the left, so as not to disturb even a twig, Chumak saw these socks and thought to himself that somebody should get a gold medal for leaving them there.

The enemy column moved forward, descending quietly from the bank, and found itself only several steps from the line of the company. A part of the first enemy column remained on top of the hill. At this moment the situation was extremely dangerous. The second line had already joined the first when suddenly something unbelievable happened. Opening strong fire at the enemy column, the whole company rose from its place without any order and rushed in an attack up the hill in order to assume a better fighting position there, felling a dozen or so enemy soldiers, nobody knew for sure how many. They could have only been wounded or perhaps just lying down, but there was no time to check.

Attaining good positions, the company fought a fierce battle. The third enemy column lay low between the trees and a part of the first and second columns ran in panic between the fire of the company and the third column. Even though things were a bit brighter, since two columns had been broken, the third one still constituted a great danger because it was so far from the company. In order to reach it in leaps and bounds it was necessary to lose a great number of our own forces, but there was no other way out except to attack.

Com. Hromenko issued a loud order, "Second platoon, heavy fire! First and third, attack!"

In a few short leaps the platoons moved forward a few steps, behind the trees. Now the second platoon was attacking and the first and third by their strong fire were preventing the enemy soldiers from lifting their heads. Behind the company, loud enemy shouts and firing were heard.

"Forward!" continued Hromenko, as well as the squad and platoon leaders. The awareness that the enemy was attacking from behind and that the company would soon find itself in the kettle of death had moved the company to make a breakthrough.

"Glory! Forward!"

The strong fire roused the enemy's third column from its

place and it ran in panic, with the company in pursuit, while enemy bullets were whistling behind them. The forest was very narrow at this spot; the fields extended along both sides, and in addition were the UPA wounded who had to be carried. The men dragged their squad leader, Kalyna, with difficulty. Kalyna kept saying that he was not wounded, but something had happened to his legs and he was unable to make a step.

Walking away several hundred steps, they reached the larger Kuzminskyi forest through a narrow left junction. Here there were strong outposts and the company was brought to order. Dr. Shuvar's diagnosis was that Kalyna had temporarily lost control of his legs due to nervous tension.

Company administrator Hupalo was now relating how in the first fighting column he took off a Polish captain's belt and pistol and the latter actually helped him to unbuckle it. He took the belt and pistol but left the Pole alive.

In this last fight in the forest the power ratio was 40 to 1, to the disadvantage of the company. Had both sides been driven by ideals, then not one UPA soldier would have come out of this forest alive. A soldier without ideals was like a tank without fuel, instructor Boryan had maintained some time ago.

Amid the tall, thick pines it had already gotten completely dark. Tired insurgents were marching in a southwesterly direction in single file. The soldiers were dead tired but they did not complain. They marched quietly, some praying, perhaps all.

The enemy propaganda found in dropped leaflets which offered various propositions had absolutely no effect upon the insurgents but hunger was now a greater enemy than the Polish Communist troops. In battle the enemy could kill a few soldiers, but hunger was destroying them all.

The company halted at the edge of the forest and an order went down the line: "Quiet! The enemy is up front!" Under different circumstances the enemy troops would have been greeted by machine-guns, but today this was impossible because it would reveal the direction of the march. After a one-kilometre march the company turned left, going around the camping enemy detachment. It seemed that all Poland had moved to Lemkivshchyna with its entire army and police. They were quartering in forest, villages, fields, and roads.

How pleasant it would have been to fight here if there had been a place to put the wounded as well as an opportunity to solve the food problem. But nevertheless they had the urge to liquidate that enemy camp.

The company reached the forest over Krepivska Volya. The soldiers who were sent to the empty village in search of food returned with empty bags; the Poles had plundered everything. Dawn was breaking and it was necessary to go deeper into the forest to spend the day. At mid-day an enemy detachment passed through the forest and bypassed the company's position, no one knowing to whose advantage.

In the evening the company marched farther west in the direction of the Syan. But why to the Syan? On the left side the road passed through Ukrainian villages and large forests and on the right there were only Polish villages and small woods. The company's destination was the Khreshchata forest, a distance of about 80 kilometres, and again Commander Hromenko proved to be a good strategist. Late at night the company reached the villages of Lishna and Dembna. To the left, at a distance of several kilometres, was the town of Syanik which was now swarming with enemy troops. All were concentrating on the forest across the Syan where UPA detachments were operating, but here the company dared to pass right behind their backs. If this march could have been completed in one night, then one could take that risk, but marching between Polish villages and small woods, such a step could only be taken by an officer with the daring and courage of Commander Hromenko.

The company marched toward the Syan and Commandant Petya with some of his men went to Lishna to wait for food. Two squads crossed the Syan and took up positions on both sides of the Syanik-Dyniv highway. The detachment crossed the river, which was only waist deep but rather broad. The rushing water often knocked the insurgents down; only the weapons and ammunition added balance to their emaciated and weary bodies. At it turned out, enemy number two — hunger — was more dangerous than the first. It changed the soldiers' mood, took away their sense of humour and the strength to carry arms, made them neglect hygiene and, as Com. Bartel said, it ruined the stomach as well as giving rise to those devilish lice.

Beyond the Syan the company halted in a grove and waited for Petya and his companions. Shots suddenly came from the village to which Petya had gone. They knew that even if the devil couldn't make it, Petya would make it, but would he manage to come out this time? Shortly, however, Petya joined the company, leading two cows behind him. The village had been alarmed and the enemy was firing in the direction of the forest, not the Syan. It seemed that Petya had been able to mask his retreat quite well.

Distributing the meat to the squads without wasting a single drop of blood, the soldiers roasted the meat by the fire and ate it. Enjoying their meal, the soldiers began to joke.

"I wonder why I'm roasting it, when it's still warm?" said Petya, holding a piece of meat on a stick over the fire.

The night was very warm, but the stars were obscured by dark clouds. Lightning suddenly cut through the sky and heavy rain began to fall. It poured for several hours without stopping, and bad weather was setting in.

"This is great!" remarked Buk cheerfully. "The rain will wash the top part of my body, the lower part was washed while crossing the Syan."



CHAPTER TWENTY NINE

The company continued to march, passing through the villages and fields, while the enemy followed in the company's tracks. Here the villages were close together and it was hard to cover up tracks on the wet ground. Marching for the third straight day through the mud and in foreign villages, and although soaked all the way through, the insurgents were in good spirits, thanks to the food acquired by Petya. Yesterday, after drinking a quart of warm soup each and having a piece of meat in their bags, they all felt as if the sea were only up to their knees. They only wondered why the commander was leading the detachment so cautiously. The company had decreased in size considerably, but nevertheless a single file stretched for about half a kilometre. At present they were still well armed and they had more automatics, but ammuni-

tion was scarce for some types of weapons. Commandant Petya also had problems in this respect, for he only had several dozen cartridges for his German-made gun.

The region through which the company was passing had a mixed population until recently. Now the Ukrainians were driven away and the Polish population had entrenched itself and taken over the planted Ukrainian fields. What would happen to those planted fields where only Ukrainians had lived? Probably the wild animals would take in the harvest. And what kind of harvest would be gathered this year by Ukrainians who had been driven out by force, by the monster created by Marx, Lenin, and Stalin, which was now reaching the stage of great despotism.

Commander Bayda, with part of the battalion staff, including Dr. Shuvar, dentist Zubenko, and others, marched with the company. At present no contacts with other companies were maintained. The only hope was that the dead contacts would not prove disappointing. Here and there the battalion command left notes in the hollows of trees or in other agreed-upon places. These places were known only to a limited number of persons, and in the event of their death such contacts became useless. A contact was left at each point, for each was known to different people. In the event of the loss of persons who knew about one point, there was hope that others would get through to other points.

After several days into the great raid through the West, the commanders were presented with a major problem: which of the three lines on the map was to be underlined?. One led through the map of the Peremyshl region and the northern part of the Carpathians, the two others through the southern portion, but all three led to West Germany. It would have been best to march in the direction of Krynytsya and then to turn and cross the Slovak border, but the company's command first had to establish contacts with commanders Ren and Khrin in the forest of Khreshchata.

In the tactical sector of commander Ren, in the forests of Khreshchata, Trykutnyk, and Tisna-Balyhorod, four UPA companies and several smaller units were operating. These detachments were engaged in heavy fighting against three enemy divisions under the command of General Mosur from the General Staff of the Ministry of Defence. The loss of one of the most outstanding Communist generals, Swierczewski,

was very embarrassing for the new Communist state in the eyes of the older brother, Moscow. Assigning tens of thousands of its troops to a relatively small area, the enemy hoped to destroy all the UPA detachments, in particular Khirin's company and its commander. The commander of the tactical sector, Ren, and his staff were also in these woods and Hromenko's company now marched in their direction.

"Wandering through half the world, I'll probably find my eternal rest very close to home," joked Com. Bartel, a native of the Khreshchata region.

Marching behind the enemy's back, the insurgents had greatly alarmed the enemy's camp. At times whole convoys of enemy troops passed very close to the company's halting place. Here and there it was even necessary to greet an enemy patrol or a larger scouting party with insurgent fire.

For a whole week, the company marched through an area that was not at all suited to partisan maneuvers but, surprisingly, the march had been quite successful so far. Only two or three days of marching remained and the detachment would reach larger woods in which it would be much better protected.

The march was handicapped by several days of rain, which not only ruined weapons and ammunition, but also soaked through every seam of the men's uniforms. When on Sunday, June 8, 1947, the sun began to shine, it not only brought a smile to the men's faces, but also caused the steam to rise from their wet uniforms.

The detachment marched into a grove over the village of Bolytsya and halted in marching positions. The company's command lacked a military map for some ten kilometers, and it had to make use of the staff map with scanty details about the terrain. Commander Hromenko and part of the staff went to the edge of the wood at the top of the hill in order to check the region and to plan the rest of the march. Suddenly, at the company's rear, strong enemy fire was heard. The company was in an uncomfortable position and in marching order. The rear guard was only a dozen steps away and the enemy was able to come very close. There could be no talk of assuming a good fighting position, and on top of it all the captain and two platoon commanders were away. The command was taken over by battalion commander Bayda and, surprisingly, the detachment mounted a good defence. By

252

making a quick turn of about twenty degrees, the detachment gave the enemy the impression that they were fleeing in panic. The enemy rushed in the direction of the company with the aim of driving the men into the open field. The excellent training and military experience of the guerrillas, however, nullified the enemy's plans. The company lay down in position like a wall and with its well-aimed fire sent the Anteks and Georges to St. Peter.

The attack was strongly in the section occupied by the first platoon. Running from a single file into arms' distance confused the enemy completely and it rushed after the platoon. It was no more than a dozen or so steps away. So as not to mingle with the enemy, the platoon of Imennyy opened strong fire. The platoon leader himself straightened up and let out a round from his automatic, felling six men before him. The heavily built machine-gunner, Slyva, could not hold out either, and stood up and fired at the enemy column with his heavy machine-gun as if it were a small automatic. The enemy began to flee, leaving behind dozens of corpses in the field. The company's losses were small but very painful. The daring platoon commander Imennyy died here, as did the experienced machine-gunner Slyva, and one of the better fighters of Petya's SB unit, Terka. The latter, examining his shot knee, took out his pistol and in the presence of his companions said his final words, "Farewell, comrades!" and shot himself through the head. For a long time this remained a very tragic moment in the memories of the witnesses. Terka's brother, Nichnyy, knelt by his side and closed his eyes, while tears rolled down his face. The men then dug the grave, lined it with pine needles and placed into it the three excellent fighters for Ukraine from the fourth district of the Peremyshl region. Chaplain Kadylo delivered a eulogy over the grave. Leaving the fresh grave, the company continued on its way. In that battle Dr. Shuvar was also wounded in the leg, but he could still march, or rather limp. Even though this fight had brought losses to the enemy in the ratio of more than ten to one, the company command still could not forgive itself for deviating from the guerrilla manual, by not protecting itself adequately during a halt.

The men could not forget the circumstances surrounding Com. Terka's death for a long time. Under different condi-

tions his leg would have been healed in a month's time, but at present he had no other way out. Two months ago in a case like this he could have been left with some Ukrainian family and a notice could have been sent to the Ukrainian Red Cross, and he would have been saved. The insurgents thought about him most of the time and feared a similar fate most of all. His brother did not say a word to anyone for several days. The men understood and did not try to involve him in a conversation. His comrades heard him utter the first words in the next battle when he felled one enemy officer and at the same time shouted, "There you have it, son of the devil!"

Rain clouds covered the sun again and it began to drizzle. Marching throughout the night, wet and hungry, the company reached the Beskyd forest by morning. Here water was boiled and the soldiers heated up their last pieces of meat in it and drank the warm water. Nobody could say that they did not have soup, for a piece of meat or a bone were nevertheless heated up in this water.

The company continued to march. The main highway cut through the forest. Placing outposts across the road, the company crossed it at arms' distance and then removed the outposts. Suddenly, no one knew from where, enemy fire opened up on them. The company administrator Hupalo was left dead on the road and Com. Lahidnyy, who had taken over the platoon right after Imennyy's death, was slightly wounded.

Physically exhausted, the company moved in the direction of the Oslava River. Halting for a rest and securing themselves well, the soldiers began to fall asleep on wet ground. The day was warm, but the weather kept changing every hour. Dark rain clouds moved in and the rain come down in buckets. Then the sun came out and dried out the water.

Squeezing out his socks, Petya said jokingly to Chumak, "What the hell! When are we getting relief? There are fifty million of us. Is it possible that we alone should fight for Ukraine?"

"Do you know how much truth there is in your jokes?" replied Chumak and added, "I wonder if anyone is going to describe these events for posterity? Or is our history still going to be painted by Repins and distorted by foreign historians?"

The conversation was interrupted by machine-gun fire. The company outposts shot at the enemy and joined the company, with the enemy attacking in their tracks. The enemy patrol was allowed to come close, then it was liquidated in its entirety. After destroying the enemy patrol, the company prepared to defend itself. Down below in the ravine one could hear the noise of the enemy units. Now they began to advance upon the company, passing carefully among the trees. Lying in well camouflaged positions, the insurgents could see the advancing enemy quite well. Here the forest was very old and dense and the trees were thick. There were no shrubs and the enemy's approach from tree to tree could be seen clearly. The attacking enemy unit seemed different to the insurgents from those that had come before it. They all seemed to be over 30; their attack was conducted more professionally, and Russian was heard more often. This was a unit from the Internal Security Corps numbering about 600. These former thieves, bandits, and rapists were now masters over life and death in Poland. They and their families were allotted the beautiful apartments of the former Polish intelligentsia. Pianos, libraries, and other things of culture were burned by them as former bourgeois remnants and their activity in the last two years consisted of destroying Polish patriots from the AK. This unit was organized on the model of the Stalinist NKVD and the whole Polish government rested upon it.

When three weeks ago three divisions surrounded a large stretch of the Khȓshchata forest with the intention of destroying the UPA companies, two companies, those of Khrin and Stakh, camped in this forest. After a two-week siege, the enemy became convinced that the terrible Khrin and his detachment were going to find their end here. This detachment had dared to destroy their Swierczewski, a general and Minister of Defence, together with his staff. But reality turned out otherwise. The enemy took out of here several hundred of its dead and twice as many wounded, while Khrin's detachment suffered only a few losses, and after two weeks of fighting broke through the encirclement, not losing even one insurgent during the operation, but leaving behind it in the breakthrough a dozen or so enemy corpses. Seeing that they could not do much against the daring UPA with regular troops, the enemy command

brought in their most dedicated and promising servants from the Internal Security Corps who had gained practice in guerrilla warfare in their struggle with the AK, some of them even fighting against UPA detachments in the Kovpak group.

Khrin's battalion was now resting somewhere in the woods of Slovakia and the duel with these "knights" had to be fought by Hromenko's company, which was in a somewhat dilapidated state after the last battles.

"It's going to be hot!" whispered Com. Lahidnyy.

The enemy attacked the circular fighting position of the company in the section held by Zaliznyak's platoon. They jumped from one tree to the next and came closer and closer to the company. They knew that not far behind the company there was the railroad, the highway, and the Oslava River and that these positions were defended by their strong detachments. Should they fail to destroy the company right away, they would chase it toward the strongly entrenched position of their troops. Having studied the UPA breakthrough tactics well, the enemy wanted to adopt it now. They wanted to come as close as possible to the detachment and to shower it with grenades. But this time the company was not surrounded; there was no need to break through and Zaliznyak's platoon greeted the enemy with fire at a distance of about thirty steps. Strong platoon fire brought down only several bandits, the remainder lay down behind large stumps and trees and opened heavy fire upon the company positions. Somewhere at the rear of the enemy line one could hear the same shouts, "Forward!" Zaliznyak's lieutenant Rubach, a bright and daring junior officer and the squad leader of the first squad, in a loud voice mocked the enemy, "Forward, for Stalin!" This was a rather good tactic, first, because making fun of them meant that the UPA detachment was not afraid, and second, this joke was making a dent in the pride of the Polish "mighty state."

The first enemy line did not move for the time being, while the second, leaping, joined the first. Suddenly grenades began to fly from the enemy line in the direction of the company, but they fell several steps short of the detachment. The enemy had a rather bad position, for it had to advance and toss grenades uphill. It continued its upward drive, but the grenades of the insurgents, which were flying downward,

did their job and the strong fire of machine-gunners Dub, Kruk, and Chornyiy joined in and soon the first attack was broken. The "best of the best" began to run in panic into the deep ravine, driven on by the strong company fire. Several insurgents ran out and took weapons and ammunition left behind by the enemy, which now represented the greatest of treasures for the company. Returning, they reported that over twenty enemy dead were lying in front of the company. They wanted to go again when they heard shouts from the ravine and a second attack began. It was impossible that the "best of the best" would lose here, and they began to move forward again, from the hail of bullets, the branches and leaves falling down upon the insurgents. The enemy was most surprised and angered by the fact that although only sparse shots were flying in their direction they could still not break through, but they had to be given credit for their tactics and determination.

Com. Hromenko now gave a command in a loud voice, "No more than two bullets for each son of the devil!"

The first victims fell in the most dangerous spot. Machine-gunner Koval died from a grenade. Squad leader Hontar, felling several enemy soldiers close to the company's positions, himself received a series of shots through his breast and thus ended his service heroically. Squad leader Hontar had the military rank of staff sergeant. He had finished four years of service with the UPA and was a native of the Ternopil region. After the company lost a squad leader and a machine-gunner, their fighting position weakened in the thirty-step segment, and at a spot where this "locust" was moving in the most. The captain then sent out Zhurba's squad and eleven other insurgents as reinforcements for the most endangered section.

The battle raged for an hour. Many enemy dead were scattered before the company, but their place was taken by new forces. Now the enemy column was lying low and firing intensely. The shrill command of the enemy came through a loud-speaker somewhere in the ravine. "Forward!" did not help. Some, who had come too close to the company, had returned and straightened out their line, which was about fifty steps away from the detachment. Three grenades were tossed from Rubach's squad and one reached the enemy line, killing several while the remainder ran from the spot. This

opportunity was used by the company to intensify its fire even more. The company commander ordered an attack; Lahidnyy's platoon was already attacking from the left and Bartel's from the right. A loud hurrah, and the quick attack of the insurgents paralyzed the fleeing enemy. Eighty-two Communist bandits now lay dead on the field of battle.

The enemy was retreating, thinking that the insurgents were still following them. The captain, knowing well the state of the ammunition and the exhaustion of his men, ordered them to return to the hill. Here, some divided the captured ammunition while others dug a grave for their fallen comrades, Koval, Hontar, and rifleman Burya. As usual Fr. Kadylo eulogized them and the men covered up the grave.



CHAPTER THIRTY

It was already quite dark when the company started on its way. The rain had stopped falling, but a cold wind was blowing. It was hard to tell whether June was generally cold this year or whether it was cold here because of the mountains, but it was cold just the same. This large Beskyd forest was cut by a railroad, a highway, and the Oslava River.

Marching in the direction of Khreshchata, the men of Hromenko's company, who in the last five days had not eaten more than five times, and were tired out by the marches, fierce battles, and the rains, passed by centuries-old fallen beech trees, whose dust shone like phosphorus. The insurgents could hardly drag their feet. Now the company was descending. It was about one kilometer to the river and

they had to hang on tightly so as not to fall flat on their faces.

A command went down the line, "March as quietly as possible!"

The wounded marched in the middle. Dr. Shuvar, supporting himself by a stick, hopped along on one leg and Dr. Syan walked close beside him. The company reached the edge of the forest, turned left, and marched along the edge until it reached its end. Here the company halted. The night was so dark that one had to look hard to see a thick tree two or three feet in front. A small stream passed by the forest. Behind it was a clearing and somewhere behind that were the railroad, the highway, and the Oslava River, but one could not tell how far away. This strategic location between two large forests was now defended very well by the enemy. In this place the forest was three kilometers wide. Now the question arose as to where was the best place to cross, how deep was the river and how high its banks? This terrain was completely unfamiliar to Hromenko's company and the darkness of the night did not permit its investigation farther than three steps away. Somewhere in the distance, to the left, one could hear the hissing of a steam locomotive.

"Is it an armoured car?" Buk asked Smyk quietly and added, "If there are locomotives in this place at night, then a large number of troops must be here too."

The captain passed along the line. He stopped near Chumak and asked, "What is across from you?"

"A stream and a clearing," answered Chumak.

The captain made several steps in the direction of the stream but could not see anything. He returned to Chumak and said, "Comrade Chumak! We must check this clearing, so that by chance, we will not come up against some cliffs and then be forced to retreat under fire. Send two or three of your men to check!" Saying this, he continued down the line. Although the command was necessary and correct, on the other hand it was a sure death for those who would make the check.

The best men for this job were Smyk, Buk, Kanya, or Voron. But Smyk was carrying a heavy machine-gun, while Kanya and Voron were each carrying two heavy rounds of machine-gun ammunition. Who, then, should be sent? Kukhar? Arpad? Malyy? For some reason Chumak could

not make up his mind. Finally he said, "Smyk, take over the squad! Buk, let's go!"

Chumak and Buk crossed the stream and began to move slowly forward.

"What's the difference? Today or tomorrow!" Chumak tried to cheer himself up and at that moment recalled the discussion between the captain and Zoryan about some march to the West. "I wonder who is going to make it?" His thoughts were interrupted by Buk, who was two feet to the right and as usual not careful. Buk was one of the most daring and deserving riflemen in the company, but at the same time the least cautious. Chumak was already beginning to regret that he had taken him along. Instead of checking with his foot on what he was stepping, Buk stood firmly on a stick. The stick broke, making a sound like a pistol shot so that the echo was heard throughout the silent valley. Two more steps and an enemy rocket went up in the air and was followed by a round from their automatics. Bullets cut through the air and whistled overhead. The enemy was much closer than the patrol had expected. A second ago, apathetic and tired, Chumak and Buk now broke the world track record, throwing themselves into the stream. There were no pebbles in the stream, only a lot of thin slime and a bit of water. A rocket was flying from the top, lighting the clearing. It was followed by a second and a third. The enemy was shelling the forest heavily. Chumak and Buk crawled in the stream toward the forest. When he climbed out of the stream, Chumak's legs shook like the leaves of an aspen, either from fear or from running too fast, or perhaps from the weight of the mud on his uniform, face, and head.

The company marched on and the enemy heavily shelled the entire line, lighting the region with rockets. The locomotive turned out to be armoured and it drove back and forth. Only a few seconds ago Chumak was unhappy about Buk's carelessness, but now he was indebted to him. Were it not for that stick and Buk's carelessness, after moving forward no more than ten steps both comrades would have found themselves in enemy trenches.

Having experienced independent commanding at one time in Khreshchata, Chumak now felt sorry for Commander Hromenko. "I wonder what he will do now?" It was easy to attack, but one had to be sure whether one could cross

here or not. Mountain rivers were often surrounded by such cliffs that one had to use ropes to climb them. Moreover, today's fierce battle with the enemy had alarmed their whole command and they had reinforced their defences of this strategic point and had also sent out an armoured locomotive. To camp in this forest for the second day would be suicide, but the crossing to Khreshchata was almost impossible.

At present the company was marching north in the direction of the empty village of Reped, alongside the projected crossing point. They had marched all last night. In the daytime the bloody Poles did not let them sleep, and now it would soon be morning and the sleep might be eternal rather than natural. The company was again approaching the crossing point but enemy fire of hurricane intensity forced it to retreat and to continue to march.

Dawn was not far away. It was after two o'clock and the eastern sky was getting brighter. At this moment every insurgent wished that the night would last for eighteen hours, but here the opposite was taking place. Day was breaking. The company emerged from the forest and into the field. The distance between soldiers was about five steps. From the right the armoured train was lighting up the field and the insurgents with strong lights and the enemy was shooting at them from heavy Russian machine-guns, Maxims. There was no way out. The company made a right turn and upon being ordered forward, in spite of great weariness, all rushed to make a breakthrough. Now heavy fire opened up. Grenades were not used, for it was possible to stumble on one's own grenade. The enemy put up staunch resistance. Because of the greyness of the early dawn, the enemy could not aim very well, and the shouts of "Glory!" were so strong that they frightened the enemy.

For the second time the insurgents of Hromenko's company witnessed the retreat of an armoured train from the field of battle. At present the highway was about thirty to forty steps away. The enemy fire ceased completely. The company continued to run, as if retreating in panic, but in the direction of the enemy. Two steps across the road, one across the railroad tracks, and they could take their morning bath in the Oslava River. The enemy column dispersed to the left and to the right. Some insurgents later claimed that they jumped over frightened enemy soldiers on the other



side of the tracks. The armoured car presently returned and fired at the company, this time across the river.

But not all were destined to cross these objects. Five insurgents died in the field of battle, among them Dr. Syan, rifleman Soroka, and Dubenko. There were also six wounded. Dr. Shuvar was wounded for the second time in the same leg, this time in the bone. Others wanted to help him, but although he had lost twenty or so kilograms due to hunger, he still weighed about 80 kilograms and about ten weary insurgents were needed to carry him. Even though his pain was intense he continued to smile and to hop along on one leg.

Presently the company reached the empty village of Turynsk. Medical assistant Zirka and Orlenko bound up the wounded. There was neither hot water nor medicine. The more severely wounded included Arkas, Hudym, Kashtan, Nazar, and Dr. Shuvar. The officers kept discussing the breakthrough and each was admiring Com. Hromenko and giving him credit for it. The soldiers went into the houses in search of food, but the enemy had taken everything edible and destroyed the rest. A dried-out potato somewhere in the corner or several recovered grains were now priceless. Petya and Chumak found several rows of potatoes planted behind the house. Its former master would not get a chance to dig them, but these two guerillas were not going to wait for them to grow. They dug out with their hands the old potatoes which had been planted. It did not matter that they had large leaves and strong roots; some of them were still rather hard but the roots also had calories and would make a good soup and some of them could be baked for the iron rations.

On the road in the middle of the village stood a barrel, in the bottom of which there was still some sauerkraut left. It was surrounded by the soldiers who reached in with their hands for this treasure. Some of them had already finished eating it, when medical assistant Zirka approached them.

Noting the scene with the sauerkraut, he pointed out, "When the enemy took and destroyed all food, why did they leave this barrel standing in the middle of the road? It may be poisoned, so you had better not eat it."

Several hundred feet from the village stretched the forest, and the company now marched in that direction. "Oh God, don't let the enemy troops be on its edge. To capture this

forest would cost a dozen or so lives." The company entered the forest and lighted the fires near the stream and cooked breakfast. It was impossible to satisfy the hunger of these starving soldiers. For that one would need several months and good food. But several dozen calories were better than nothing.

The wounded were joined by those who had eaten the sauerkraut. Their eyes became enlarged and they began to vomit. Within two hours, two insurgents had died and several others had become severely ill. Had the Communists not been brutal enough in deporting hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian people from their own villages. Did they have to poison food on top of it all? Would the soldiers of UPA ever attempt such a base trick? Never! Now each one was more convinced than ever that only a Ukrainian state with a humane and honest population could destroy the predatory influence of the Russians in East Europe.

Burying its comrades, the company moved deep into the forest. Scouts climbed tall trees. From here, as far as the eye could see, stretched the forest. Hundreds of guerrilla companies could have stayed here and it would be hard to detect them. But enemy detachments occupied almost every hill and clearing, so how many of them were likely to be here?

The company halted for a short rest. In several minutes the patrol opened heavy fire at the advancing enemy. Fighting positions were not very good here and the company's commander ordered the march to continue, but here the company also lost one soldier from the outpost. Six enemy corpses were lying in the outpost's field of defence and close to them was the body of rifleman Shun, who could not be taken away and buried.

The company continued to march. Here by the stream some group had covered its fire and had just left. By the way the fire was camouflaged it was easy to tell that insurgents had been here. Battalion commander Bayda was very pleased, hoping to meet some other insurgent unit and establish contact with other UPA companies. But to no avail. The insurgent unit did not think that Hromenko's company could be here. They retreated farther into the forest, thinking that the enemy troops were advancing toward them. One

could follow enemy tracks for miles, but not a trace was left behind this group of insurgents.

Too bad that Khrin's battalion or Bayda's other companies were not here. They were not idle, however. Under the command of Burlaka, they were waging fierce battles in the Birchany region. The company commander Lastivka and his young brother died in a fierce fight near Lupna and company commander Krylach near Zavadka. Burlaka's battalion, just as Hromenko's company, was now engaged in fighting several times a day. Commander Burlaka found a dead contact and was now moving toward the Slovak border with his detachment. The hardest work was again taken over by the old members of the OUN. Several members of each UPA company were assigned to the administrative groups of OUN.

Marching east through the woods, the company halted in the thickets near the village of Ryabe. Here Smyk recognized the place where food had been delivered for those building the hospital.

"Do you recognize this place?" he asked Buk and added, "We thought then that these times were the hardest."

"I wonder if we'll see the ruined hospital?" joined in Chumak.

In the evening the company passed close to the ruined hospital. Chumak ran up to the captain and pointed in the direction of the hospital, where now only planks from the ceiling were sticking out, partially covered by dirt.

The company stopped in the thickly wooded area for the night. Each man picked out a good fighting position in the event of a battle. Guards were posted and fires lighted. Now the insurgents warmed themselves. In the event of an enemy attack, each knew his fighting position very well and could assume it at any moment. The night was clear, the moon shone, and, as Petya said jokingly, it was romantic. But now white bread was on the mind of each man and all talked about it. If someone had given each soldier a small loaf of bread now, then even the enemy would not appear to be such a problem. Petya was lying by the fire, a little swollen from hunger.

"You have gained a lot of weight," said Chumak jokingly, giving him his last small baked potato which now had more value than the largest diamond in the world. Petya stretched

out his swollen hand, carefully broke this tiny potato and gave half of it back to Chumak.

After the last rains the nights were very cold and each man's teeth were chattering. None of the soldiers was sick; they were only hungry, swollen from hunger and wounded. Those who had seen these proud, cheerful, singing, and joking insurgents in the past would not recognize them today. Now only pride and determination were left to them. As they lay by the fire, hardly anyone spoke. If only Ukrainians had been here, how differently would our cause look. At one time in these regions, Ukrainian insurgent life was seething for over four years. Here our people saw many an insurgent victory over the enemy. For years the enemy did not dare to set its foot here. The enemy knew that this was not just a rebellion of several hundred nationalists, but a rebellion of a whole nation against subjugation. Now base enemy intrigues, arrests, and intimidation were of no use. Only two months ago the enemy had absolutely no idea about the state of the UPA detachments and the OUN network. These were not the times when ignorant people denounced Bilas and Danylyshyn. Now the Ukrainian population not only did not betray its own but joined in the fierce struggle.

Petya moved a half-burned stick back to the fire with his foot. Chumak was shaving off his beard with a dull kitchen razor and cursing.

"Chumak," remarked Petya, "did you hear about the great raid?"

"Only a few things. I don't know why we have to starve to death here" replied Chumak.

"The old man must join Ren," continued Petya.

Hromenko came closer to them. Petya, reclining, raised his hand to his forehead. Chumak did the same.

"How are you?" asked the commander.

"Wonderful!" answered Petya.

"Only one more day and then we will manage," said Com. Hromenko, trying to cheer them up, and then, seeing that Chumak was shaving, he turned to Petya and remarked, "Chumak is getting ready for girls; that's why he's shaving!"

"I'm afraid of starting a lice colony in my beard," answered Chumak more seriously.

The commander began to speak again, "It seems that

tomorrow is going to be a very 'hot' day. There are masses of enemy troops here. I hope that they won't be joined by the ISC detachments, then we can disperse this mob somehow," he said, thinking about regular enemy troops.

"How is your squad on ammunition?" he asked Chumak.

"There are 350 for the machine-gun and only 65 for mine."

"Well, that's not so bad," adding, "In every battle try to capture enemy ammunition."

The wounded continued to be the greatest burden for the company and it was almost a wonder that so far there were no cases of gangrene.

The enemy forces concentrated all their attention on the forests of Khreshchata. Battalion Commander Bayda knew this forest the best for he had served here as lieutenant to Commander Ren until March, 1946. He now checked several contact points but so far had not been able to establish contacts either with Khrin's battalion or with Commander Ren.

The morning sun was again shining through the trees and a long day was beginning. How many of these days had already gone by completely unnoticed? And what about today? The sun had just rolled out from behind the mountains and forests and the enemy units could be heard all around. A very long day was again beginning for the insurgents. "I wonder what it will bring? How many battles will we have to fight? For how many is this warm sun shining for the last time?" thought Chumak.

The company moved forward slowly. The rear flank was already fighting the enemy. Nobody panicked but moved slowly to the front. Even though the average age of the soldiers was 22, to judge by their appearance today they seemed to be 40 or 50. They looked like wounded lions surrounded by wild dogs. Barking to these dogs from a machine-gun or an automatic here and there the soldiers continued to move forward. But even under these conditions, humour was not lacking. To the side of the passing riflemen's file hopped wounded Dr. Shuvar; next to him walked Dr. Zubenko, thin as a straw, and behind them the wounded Hudym who turned to Dr. Shuvar and said, "Doctor, give a hand to Dr. Zubenko so that he won't be blown from his feet by the wind." Dr. Shuvar only smiled and continued to hop along on one leg.

The company marched on through the forest in a westerly direction. After half an hour's march the enemy was still attacking the company's rear. One round from the machine-gun of the rear guard again stopped it for some time. Rifleman Piven had no strength to march any farther and began to fall behind the company. It was impossible to help him. He remained a score or so steps behind the company, and the enemy was about to catch up with him. Piven saw his hopeless situation and shot himself several steps in front of the enemy.

Now the situation looked suspicious. Large enemy units advanced upon the company in a semi-circle. The enemy must have seen, from the plane, the fires burning in the company's camp last night and had begun the attack at night.

"It means that we are walking into an ambush," said Com. Hromenko to Com. Bayda.

Marching up hill the weary insurgents could hardly drag their feet and in addition the day was very hot and humid after the great rains. How strange that during the night all were shivering from the cold, but now they were almost melting from the heat.

Ahead, on the left, there was a small clearing. As usual in such cases, the UPA detachment did not go out into the open field. Instead, the company now turned a bit to the right in order to bypass the clearing. Tall, thick beech trees here offered protection but provided hardly any cover. The marching detachment could be seen from far away.

Suddenly heavy fire opened up on the company from the left side and the enemy, advancing in the rear, also opened fire. The company had no choice other than to fight their way out. The men drew on their last strength and rushed forward. Battalion doctor, Dr. Shuvar, with a leg swollen to the size of a bucket, limped alongside Lahidnyi's second platoon. The other wounded were scattered throughout the squads, so as not to create a weak link in marches and battles and so that they could be helped in passing battles. Under the heavy shelling, Dr. Shuvar lost the stick which he needed for support. At present he held a pistol in his hand and hobbled as well as he could on one leg. The company advanced in the face of a hailstorm of enemy fire. The first victims had fallen. Machine-gunner Hrim perished, and a bit farther down fell political instructor Topolya. Dr. Shuvar found it

ever harder to keep up with the company. He already had lost his bag, his belt had unbuckled, and his coat had opened. He was aware that he could not go on like this, and he did not want to be a burden to his comrades. Therefore he pulled the trigger of his pistol and shot himself. He could not be buried and his body was left at the mercy of the barbaric enemy. Would his family and friends ever find out how Dr. Shuvar — Evhen Luzhytsky — fought and died for his beloved Ukraine? This thoroughly honest man, a revolutionary, a leader, and a lover of music had often cheered up the Ukrainian population and the insurgents with his choir. But not only Ukrainians. Often the companies of Bayda's battalion sang under his direction in Polish villages and thus won a good name for the UPA detachments.

Now the second platoon was waging the fiercest fight. Squad leader Tor fell not far from the enemy line. The death of squad leader Tor was another painful loss for Hromenko's company. He was a daring and deserving soldier and a good junior officer. In 1944, with a group of 60 men he went through the Lemky region, fleeing before the Bolshevik front. Near the village of Volosatyy they came across Ren's battalion and all of them joined the UPA. After several days in the UPA their former leader remembered that his loyalty was not to the Ukrainian revolution but to his chief. He deserted from the ranks of the UPA and fled abroad.

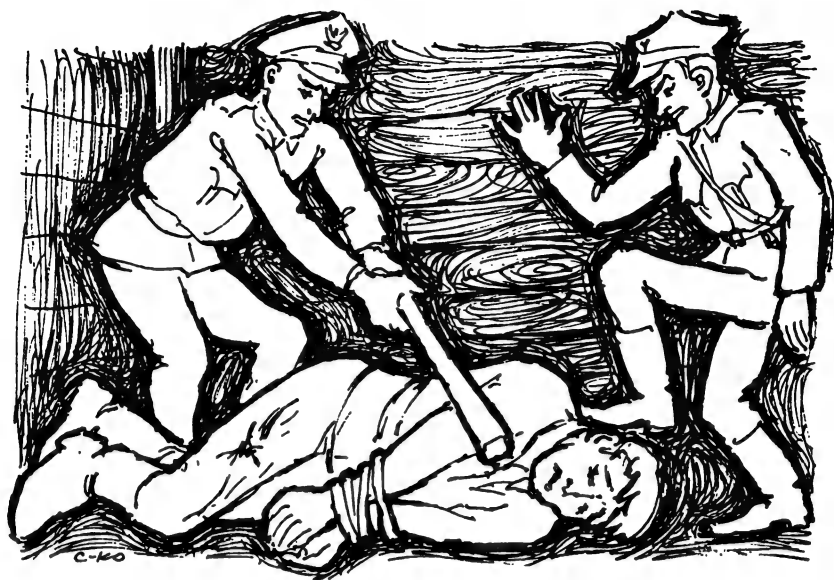
Two heavily entrenched enemy machine-guns across from the clearing had cut the company in two. The platoons of Bartel and Zaliznyak were now attacking from the clearing's right side and the platoon of Lahidnyy from the left. Loza's squad was doing a good job, but the action was hottest in the section held by Chumak's squad. The enemy was lying low near the path and the stream, and one had to run forward for about twenty steps to toss a grenade, while the enemy could already be seen at the rear. Although Chumak's squad, with such soldiers as Smyk, Buk, Kanya, Voron, and others, did not always need help, today they were very grateful that Commandant Petya and his unit were so close to them. Now Chumak threw his last grenade, although he knew that it would not reach the enemy. But he nevertheless forced the enemy soldiers to duck their heads for a moment and in the meantime Buk advanced several steps and forced the enemy to crawl farther into the brook.

Now the platoon started a hand-to-hand fight. Near Smyk and Buk three enemy soldiers lay beside the machine-gun. Almost paralyzed, they were neither shooting nor fleeing; they had just opened their mouths and their eyes. Two other brave ones with aimed rifles were silenced forever by an automatic of some insurgent. Petya was firing his pistol. He had only a dozen or so bullets left but he was saving them as though he expected an even greater fight and seemed sure of living long enough to see it. A part of the enemy was running in panic; the insurgents were pursuing them and they in turn were followed by an enemy column.

The first line of the ambush had been broken. The insurgents were collecting enemy ammunition and weapons and rifleman Arpad took out half a loaf of bread from the bag of an enemy and ran up hill, stuffing it in his mouth. Several cans of food were captured. Petya found a small can of coffee, and Chumak a pack of cigarettes.

Leaving twenty enemy corpses in the stream and several dozen in the sector of the entire platoon, the insurgents moved up a mountain, breathless. Seeing that the platoon was cut off from the rest of the company, the soldiers began to worry. There was no use in even talking about a predetermined rallying point, as was usually done, for the platoon was in danger of straying from the rest of the company. But guerrilla instinct brought the company together in 15 minutes.

The company climbed a mountain, sent out outposts and halted for a rest. The insurgents forgot their hunger for a minute and talked about the recent fierce but successful breakthrough.



CHAPTER THIRTY ONE

The enemy regiments were at this time commanded by General Mossor with his generals and advisors from Moscow. They were sure that with their great numbers they would destroy the terrible Khrin and his UPA detachment. But this time as well, Khrin, a good strategist, managed to break through from his surroundings and crossed the Soviet border into Halychyna near the Magura Mountain, without even a chance to say goodbye to the detachments which were leaving for the raid to the West. This was regrettable, for united battalions could have wiped the nose of the second Russian general and his regiments.

The UPA Command sent its important instructions by two or more contact routes. Being aware of the fact that almost all such contacts in the Zakerzonnya region had been broken,

the command of Bayda's battalion tried to establish contacts with commanders Ren and Khrin at all costs, in order to transmit orders from the Supreme Headquarters of UPA-West. Due to fierce fighting in the region, these orders were already several weeks late. In the meantime Commander Khrin received another set of orders through the Stryi region, which came from the Supreme Headquarters UPA-West much later. Khrin's battalion waited for the detachments from the Peremyshl region and each day waged fierce battles and breakthroughs. Being convinced that it was almost impossible for Bayda's battalion, exhausted in battles, to come to this hell, each day of waiting for it cost many lives in the ranks of Khrin's battalion. Therefore he discarded the idea of the battalions' farewell and led his detachment to the East.

General Mossor with his staff was stationed in the village of Komancha. His quarters were defended by large detachments of Polish troops; he was more careful than his predecessor, Swierczewski. Brought up in Moscow, he had lived there all his life and the Polish descent of his mother sufficed as evidence that he was a good Polish patriot. He already knew several hundred words in Polish which he used while in Warsaw, but now he reverted to his "native tongue." Military maps hung on the white walls of a Ukrainian house and he placed red crosses at each place where a battle had been waged against the UPA detachments. He had already marked the whole map showing the forests of Khreshchata and Trykutnyk with these crosses, and now he was marking the map in the Syanik region as far as the Oslava River and the village of Komancha. He received intelligence reports to the effect that the UPA detachments from the Peremyshl region were coming to assist Com. Khrin. He gave an order to strengthen the defences of his staff and later informed his subordinates by telephone about the approach of the UPA detachments to this territory. Now he drank vodka by the glass and yelled at his officers in vulgar Russian. In this section he had three divisions of "capitalist Polish trash" as he called them, against several UPA companies. He was foaming with rage after each report of a fight, finding out about tens of his own dead as against only individual insurgent casualties. When he was informed that several fires could be seen in the UPA camp on the hill near Ryaby,

he ordered a state of alert in the direction where UPA units were camping and began to plan a trap for them. Drawing several lines and circles on the map, he was happy that he had found a brilliant solution for the destruction of the UPA detachment. Now he finished drinking his vodka, which was standing on the table, and ordered that he be placed in telephone contact with regiment commanders.

Some regiments took up fighting positions, an ambush, in the middle of the Khreshchata woods; others attacked in a semi-circle from Lisko alongside the Lisko-Balyhorod highway and then Lubny-Ryaba. Approaching in a semi-circle to the halting place of the company at night, they drew close to the company by sunrise. Several hours later, General Mossor, receiving a report about the fight which had been planned by him, was boiling with rage and shouting, "You had them surrounded and you only killed four bandits with such great losses of our own!"

General Sobiesiak, who personally commanded this action, stood as white as a wall and did not even try to defend himself.

General Mossor continued to rage and did not spare coarse words. Finally he asked reproachfully.

"What kind of Communists are you? Many of these Polish soldiers were Communists. They read and heard so much Communist propaganda that they wanted to rob their landlords, the capitalists, and waited for the promised free land. Yet they had no desire to fight for the Ukrainian mountains of the Lemky region."

In the afternoon the enemy began to bring back its corpses to the village of Komancha near Gen. Mossor's headquarters. Among them were bodies of the fallen insurgents, Dr. Shuvar, squad leader Tor and Hrim. They were brought here as if to prove the enemy's "great achievements." If the fallen men could only have opened their eyes for a moment and seen the hostile surroundings and the number of their victims, they would have been very proud of themselves and their comrades.

Not far from the place where Dr. Shuvar, Tor, and Hrim had fallen in the barn near the headquarters of Gen. Mossor, lay the wounded rifleman Piven. He was a native of Yavirnyk Ruskyy, aged 21, quiet and humble by nature, of small build and hardly ever noticeable. He was always neat, and most of

the time liked to be alone and read books, which he used to borrow from people in the villages. In his bag, besides ammunition, bandages, a spoon, and a book there was always a small chess board and chessmen. His squad leader Rubach considered him to be an ordinary rifleman, perhaps because of his small build or his quiet nature. And perhaps it was because of his lack of aggressiveness in acquiring food that he became so weak and swollen, and fell behind the company and now found himself here. For when the enemy was on the company's heels, Piven quickly placed the rifle's barrel under his throat and pulled the trigger, so as not to fall into the enemy's hands. But to his great dismay the bullet only fractured his left jaw and he fell into the enemy's hands, wounded and unconscious. Along the way to the village somebody taped up one small hole under his chin and the second, much larger one torn by the bullet in his left cheek. The enemy wanted to bring him back to headquarters alive.

Piven regained consciousness in the barn and saw several executioners standing over him. His hands and legs were tied behind him and he was lying on the ground of the barn in a sorry state. They had not even placed any straw beneath him. After his recent experience and the pain from his wounds, he was surprised at regaining his memory and was angry at himself for bungling his attempt to end his misery. He knew how Russian and Polish chauvinists treated Ukrainian insurgents and often saw Ukrainian people, including children, who had been massacred by them. Now he was sincerely begging God to give him strength to endure the tortures and not to betray his comrades and his nation. He resolved that he would not say a word and tried to cheer himself up with the thought that he might die soon anyway. But when he was forced to eat some soup, he became more frightened. Piven saw how the political instructor said something to the nurse and the latter came close to him and began to ask about his health and wounds. Knowing that the enemy was thus trying to provoke him to talk, he only shook his head lightly. At that time some sadist with a pistol in his hand and eyes filled with revenge ran up to him and kicked him hard in the ribs. Two others beat him on his legs and all over his body with thick sticks. Piven rolled on the ground in pain. His bandage fell off and blood covered his eyes. He now lay on his stomach and the bandits were hitting him all over his body, including

his arms which were tied behind him. Piven cried out to God in sorrow, asking Him why He was punishing him and the entire Ukrainian nation. "Are our people such sinners in the eyes of God?"

The bandits became tired. Two of them were summoned to the general's office and two others were smoking and looking at Piven with revenge. This time they changed their tactics. They spoke to Piven in good Ukrainian and tried to convince him that the sooner he would tell them everything, the sooner they would pardon him and take him to a hospital and let him live freely.

"But we are going to pardon you only when you tell us about the other bandits, for otherwise, why should we?" Piven closed his eyes, tightly closed his smashed jaw with broken teeth, and continued to pray fervently to God. His body was becoming numb and he could not feel the pain as much, but when he tried to turn on one side, he began to feel terrible again. He continued to remain silent.

One chauvinist changed to Polish and shouted like a madman, "I'll give you Ukraine! I'll show you your Volhynia! I'll give you Lviv! We'll give you Ukraine, just as Stalin gave it to you!" and he kicked Piven hard in the ribs again. The other two bandits returned to the barn and asked what Piven had said. The sadist with a cataract in his eye said that this staunch Banderite would not say anything.

"Because you don't know how to ask him." The bandit began to untie Piven's hands. He grabbed Piven's small, delicate hand, thrust his thin fingers between the bandit's huge ones, and began to twist Piven's arm and fingers. Piven shut his wounded jaw even more tightly and large tears, looking like beads, ran down his eyes. But his face did not look sorrowful; it was boiling with rage against the base enemy. How many such tortures had to be endured by the insurgents and the Ukrainian people, yet our troops were releasing enemy captives so humanely.

"Oh God, if only I had known, I would have fought with you differently," thought Piven.

The bandits went mad with rage. The general demanded information and they could not get it from this cursed Banderite. Captain Rudek, from an Internal Security Corps Division, who grew up in the Ukrainian black earth belt in Volhynia, was now the most cruel. He grabbed a rifle from a

Polish soldier, fixed a bayonet on it, and strongly pierced Piven's leg above the knee all the way to the bone. In unbearable pain, Piven screamed out loud for the first time. The other bandits were now kicking Piven on all sides with their military boots. Brutalized beyond recognition, Piven now lay unconscious. Rudek did not use the rope anymore, but bound Piven's hands in the back with handcuffs. On the street a car with some Ukrainian captives came to a halt and the bandits ran up to it immediately.

The nurse tore Piven's pants and put a plaster on the leg wound made by the bayonet, for they wanted to keep him alive. Now the barn gates were closed on the outside and the guards paced back and forth, as if Piven could still run away. After some time Piven regained consciousness and tried not to move even one muscle for each move brought such agonizing pain. He was now listening for any sounds and was afraid that the gates would squeak and the murderers would come in again. mostly he thought about how to finish with himself before they came.

In the barn it was already getting grey. The wounds of the fractured jaw and the leg were beginning to ache even more. His bruised body also hurt terribly. He prayed even more fervently to God and at the same time felt such sorrow that tears rolled down his cheeks continuously.

"Oh Mother of God, help me to fall asleep forever!" He continued to lie on his stomach and tried to turn to the side, but in making this move he tore off some of the bandages and warm blood began to flow from the wound. This gave him an idea. Gathering all his strength he lifted himself to a sitting position. Supporting himself with his hands, handcuffed in the back, he placed his jaw between his knees and, paying no attention to the excruciating pain, tore off the bandages from the jaw, thus irritating the wounds. Warm blood flowed down his body. There wasn't much of it left in his body anyway. The pain was decreasing and began to feel better. His thoughts hovered around his short but happy life, like free birds jumping from one branch to the next. His beautiful village, his family, friends, and the good times in the National Home now stood before his eyes. How many of them were there? Oh God, where are they now? Maybe they were suffering like him only because they were Ukrainians. His eyes were beginning to stick together. "Oh God, have mercy

on me, a sinner." He now lay on his back on his handcuffed hands. The ground was very cold, but one arm was kept warm by the flowing blood. Outside, the night was beautiful and warm. One could hear the murmuring of water, the chirping of a cricket, and the croaking of frogs. Dark clouds were covering the sky and a fine rain began to fall. The silence of this beautiful June night was often interrupted by bellowing motors and the explosion of artillery shells somewhere in the distance. But Piven did not hear them anymore. He left his ruined body to the enemy and his strong spirit joined the new great Ukrainian army whose history was similar to his.

On the field road near Mossor's headquarters the brakes screeched and an American jeep came to a halt. Two members of the Polish Gendarmerie and two NKVD agents jumped out of it. In the car sat a man wearing a Polish police uniform, his head in bandages, his uniform torn, and chains on his hands. They dragged him to Mossor's headquarters and the four executioners who had just finished torturing Piven ran after him. This was an old nationalist, a revolutionary, aged about 40, who before the war had been trained and sent to work for the Polish police. He held this job, with small interruptions, up to this time. His pseudonym was Vistun and he only maintained contacts with the headquarters of UPA-West. Col. Orest, the commander of UPA-West, fearing that various contacts might prove disappointing, sent Vistun into the Balyhorod region as a "legal" man.

There was no civilian population in the Balyhorod area and the neighbouring villages any longer and Vistun's presence evoked the enemy's suspicions and he was arrested. Vistun, seeing that his "legal" documents were of no use to him here, wanted to flee, but was wounded and caught along the way. In the peak of his police hat they found a message — an order from Com. Orest to commanders Ren and Khrin. Vistun was tortured in jail during the inquest and now he was brought here upon orders from Gen. Mossor. The message was in code and the enemy had not been able to decipher it. Vistun himself did not know about the contents of the message nor the code. Under torture the enemy only forced him to repeat the verbal order. And it said that detachments of Bayda's battalion were transferring into the woods on Khreshchata and that Com. Ren had to dispatch the detachments from Kholodnyy Yar to area number 100, and detachments

of Lemko sector to area 16. The dates were not specified and the enemy command could only find out that all larger UPA detachments were to converge on the Khreshchata region from the regions of Peremyshl, Krynytsya, and Trykutnyk. This confession, which Vistun did not want to make for a long time, was confirmed by the fighting done by Hromenko's company, whose path was marked on General Mossor's map by red crosses from Syanik to the Oslava River and the Khreshchata woods.

Vistun, bound with chains and brutally beaten by Rudek, was taken to Syanik, and General Mossor immediately began to phone to the 6th, 7th, and 8th divisions as well as to the ISC division, which were stationed in the villages of Koman-cha, Smilnyky, Volya Myhova, Maniova, Reped, Turynsko, Roztoky, and Dushatyn. In the woods Colonel Siwicki, who commanded the 6th division, and General Sobiesiak were told to come to General Mossor for a meeting in the evening. At that meeting they decided to bring another division into this region.



CHAPTER THIRTY TWO

Hromenko's company was just passing through this enemy hell and somewhere in the rear the other companies commanded by Burlaka were also moving in this direction.

Burlaka's battalion reached Khreshchata two weeks after Hromenko's company did. It was engaged in many battles with the enemy, caught several soldiers from the new division which was recently ordered here by General Mossor, and dressed his rather poorly clothed soldiers in their uniforms. Now Burlaka's battalion had a squad dressed in the uniforms of the Polish Kosciusko followers, with sharp, four-cornered hats with yellow bands around them. After several days of marching and breakthroughs in the woods in Khreshchata, Burlaka's battalion crossed the Slovak border on July 5, 1947.

In the evening Hromenko's company set out for the village

of Maniv, bypassing the village of Volya Myhova. Battalion commander Bayda left for one bunker with two riflemen to establish a contact but found only the empty office of Commander Ren. From it he brought several rounds of ammunition and a few kilograms of salt. Commander Bayda was very disappointed. Apparently the aim of the contact was extremely important. Because of this contact the company had marched to the woods of Khreshchata and engaged in many battles. Losses in terms of human life were rather large and still there was no contact.

The company camped in a stream near the Slovak border. Commander Bayda took with him instructor Zoryan and two riflemen and, saying farewell to the company's staff, went to look further for the contact with section Commander Ren.

In Maniv, enemy troops were stationed in every house and barn. In the stream beyond the village the company lighted several fires, concealed them with leafy branches, and began to warm themselves. Medical assistants boiled water and changed the bandages on the wounded. Father Kadylo and Com. Bartel, who had now completely lost his former pot belly, came to the fire by Chumak's squad.

"What are we going to do next?" Chumak asked them.

"Chumak, we'll pray and continue to fight the devils!" answered Father Kadylo.

"In other words, the tactic is not changing," added Com. Bartel, half jokingly. "You know Father, I was born in this village..." but the conversation was interrupted by the duty officer.

"Comrade Chumak, the Commander wants you."

"I wonder why?" he asked Father Kadylo and Bartel, and went to the Commander. The Commander was holding a compass and a military map in his hand, looking at them by the light of the fire. Chumak did not interrupt him. Putting the map back in its holder, the Commander saw Chumak, who then reported his arrival.

"Comrade Chumak!" began Com. Hromenko, "We must go on a rather long and concealed march for two days and the boys are falling from their feet from hunger. Won't you try somehow to get some food?" Chumak had never heard his commander use such a tone of command. Also, he did not understand where he could possibly get food.

Thinking that the Commander wanted to send him to

Slovakia for food, he asked, "Do you mean a village in Slovakia?"

"No," answered the Commander. "The first villages beyond the border are rather far. I mean this village, Maniv."

"Oh, this is going to be extremely hard. It is full of enemy troops, but we'll try," answered Chumak.

As Chumak reported his departure the Commander added one more word: "Good luck!"

Gathering his squad which, thank God, still numbered ten insurgents, Chumak started for the edge of the forest. They halted here and Chumak began to explain their mission. He listened to the men's suggestions regarding the method of approach and then chose the outposts, the guards, and the organizers (scavengers) of food. It was about one kilometer from the forest to the village, but to go straight into the village would have been sheer suicide for the whole squad. Therefore it was necessary to go around through the fields and to reach the village in the middle. This tactic was good for an approach but very dangerous for a retreat. The night was dark but a man could be seen at a distance of several steps. The squad emerged from the forest and made a semi-circle by the fields and into the village. Even though these fields were cultivated, in some spots they were so hilly and rough that it was necessary to walk very carefully so as not to fall down. Chumak's squad was never so pessimistic about a mission as today. Being aware of the empty Ukrainian villages, the destruction or the carting away of food by the enemy, and the fact that a whole enemy detachment was stationed in this village, the men did not have much hope for procuring food from the enemy. First of all, they had no idea of where the enemy kitchen and the food wagons were to be found, and second, it was unthinkable that one squad could rout the enemy.

The company's soldiers were in very bad physical shape. Apathetic and wounded men were lying by the fire and were joined by several others, weakened by the fighting, the marches, and especially hunger. The situation was so grave that if they had another two days of marching without food, the whole company would fall into the enemy's hands without a fight. Com. Hromenko wanted to plan a march of several days, but was well aware that without food it could not succeed.

Chumak, holding his automatic in his hand, was thinking about the best way to get food. Pulling a stem with a leaf from the field, he began to chew on it, perhaps from nervous tension. The stem was sour and he realized that it was wild sorrel. The chewed stem and leaf reached the hungry stomach in a few seconds and provided several calories.

The squad was descending to the stream very cautiously. It was the same stream by which the company was camping by the fires at a distance of about two kilometres. Beyond the stream there was a small hill, with houses scattered at various angles. From there the squad moved on to the first of the houses by way of making small excavations. A faint light burned in each house. Many wagons and cannons were on the road. Smyk took up his position with a machine-gun and the remainder of the squad quietly moved to the house at the right. In the house under which Chumak and Buk had crawled, the Poles were singing some Polish song to the tune of "Black Eyes."

"What next?" Buk asked Chumak quietly.

"Look for the cellar, pantry, storage bin, or stable, and if you see a horse, climb on it right away and run to the company," said Chumak.

Buk left Chumak and the latter continued to make other plans. "We'll have to go into the house and get at least several cans of food from the enemy," thought Chumak. "If the Anteks fail to raise their hands, we'll send them to meet St. Peter." This thought was interrupted by Buk and Arpad who reported that there was a small storage bin under the barn containing some potatoes. Happy to hear this, Chumak came close to the barn, told Buk to go inside by the tiny opening, while Arpad spread out canvas for the potatoes. The other men were standing outside the doors ready to fire, so that in the event of enemy fire Buk would be able to climb out of the bin. Buk handed over the first bag of small potatoes, which were emptied into the canvas, together with Buk's extra ammunition, and Arpad returned the bag to Buk. Thus the small bag wandered back and forth several times. Having several dozen small potatoes on the canvas, Chumak sent the cook back to the stream with them.

"Guard this food more than you would diamonds!" he ordered.

Another piece of canvas was already lying on the ground

and the potatoes were emptied on it from Buk's bag. Feeling each corner of the bin and finding no more potatoes, Buk climbed out. Rifleman Shumnnyy started back to the company with the second batch of potatoes and also with orders to guard them like a treasure. Buk and Arpad received Chumak's permission to check the wagons on the road. The remainder of the comrades stayed several dozen feet from the wagons, ready to shoot in defence of Buk and Arpad. Checking the second wagon, Buk opened a box and began to pull something out, but the box squeaked and alerted the guard, who yelled, "Halt!" firing a shot at the same time.

Chumak fired a round in the direction of the guard and ordered his men to run for the stream. They had to retreat through an open field. Having been alerted, the enemy troops were now strongly shelling the hill. After each rocket the insurgents fell to the ground, lay there motionless, and then ran fast for a dozen steps or so. Smyk with the machine-gun and Chumak defended the rear while Buk was ordered to run to the front and save the potatoes at all costs. The enemy shelled both the woods and the field. The squad was already outside the rockets' firing range, and the enemy could no longer hit its mark, although some stray bullet could still find the body of an insurgent. The men were now so familiar with the whistling of bullets that they could easily tell how far this or that bullet had passed from their ears. Chumak was now thinking of two things. First, he was hoping that the men would not spill the potatoes, and second, he was sorry that the company was now in such an exhausted state. At any other time, the bandits in this village could have been easily destroyed by two squads.

The squad reached the company without suffering any losses, and supply sergeants distributed the potatoes. The cooks baked half and used the other half to make soup. Rifleman Buk now had the pleasure of associating with the company "aces" who surrounded his fire, while he took out a small potato from his pocket from time to time and tossed it in the direction of dentist Zubenko, Petya, Bartel, Kalyna, or Zhurba. When Chumak joined them and noticed that something was strange, all grinned and remained silent, as if nothing had happened. Chumak became one of the culprits too when Buk turned to him with a proposition, "Commander,

here's a nicely baked one for you." Even though it was still raw inside Chumak did not waste it.

Doctor Zubenko bet that he could eat forty potatoes by himself, but this bet was not very realistic and he had to content himself with ten. Here the rules of dining were broken somewhat for they ate the baked delicacies first and the thin soup later. Although it was neither salted nor buttered, in the opinion of Father Kadylo the potato peel in the soup tasted like bacon. Enemy machine-guns were still plowing the empty fields, and after some food, a new group went to man the outposts.

After washing down the baked potatoes with warm soup, the insurgents' attitude changed. Now one could hear laughter and jokes; even the captain was more cheerful, seeing his smiling soldiers. Of course, he had reasons to be proud. In the history of fighting it was hard to find an equal to his company. Even today, in the event of a fight with forces ten times greater than his, he was sure that the enemy would lose weapons and bags while fleeing in fear.

The quartermaster ordered an assembly and told the soldiers that each man should save two baked potatoes as an iron ration. This order came a bit too late for now only every other man had this priceless treasure in his bag. Then Com. Hromenko began to speak.

"Comrades, not far from here is the Slovak border which we shall cross today. We are going on a distant raid. Nobody knows when we are going to return to Ukraine, but remember that you are bound at all times by the oath of a soldier of UPA. At this time hundreds of UPA detachments and smaller units are waging fierce battles in various regions of Ukraine. Together with the UPA detachments, those of the Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations are also fighting. Some detachments, as you have already seen, are staging propaganda raids into various countries, and we are really setting out on such a raid today. Therefore please take good care of your external appearance, discipline, and order. In such a march if somebody strays from the detachment, he is lost." Here the captain ordered prayer and a moment of silence for the fallen comrades. Only several men from the detachment knew which direction this raid was going to take, but after the captain's address, all suspected that it seemed like a farewell to the territories of Ukraine.

The fires were extinguished, the outposts were recalled, and the company was soon on its way. All marched at arms' distance and had orders not to leave any traces behind. Marching up a relatively high hill for not more than 600-700 steps, with weapons held at readiness to fight at any moment, the detachment crossed a narrow path on top of a hill and went deeper into the forest. A white cement post stood alongside this road. Each man thought that he would have to fight at this border. The night was warm and a fine rain was falling. After a half-hour's march, the company halted and the captain notified the soldiers that they had crossed the Slovak frontier half an hour ago. This happened on June 13, 1947.

"The frontier is not far away from the place where we camped," explained Commander Bartel, who had often crossed the border as a civilian. Now each insurgent was angry at himself for marching half an hour under such strain, ready to fight at any moment. This forest was very extensive and had a southward bent. Lights could be seen far into the valley and passing trains could be heard. Even in the dark of night one could feel that there was civilized life in the southern part of the Carpathians, unlike the northern part where the entire Lemky and Peremyshl regions had been completely ruined by the enemy.

The company posted guards and the soldiers went to sleep. Neither the rushing of the brooks nor the morning songs of birds could be heard by the tired insurgents. Only around noon did the strong rays of the sun awaken them. A path with white cement posts leading through the hill tops remained not more than two or three kilometres behind the detachment. But this path had a psychological effect, for behind it, the men of Hromenko's company left their native land. Even though the enemy had turned a part of Ukraine into a wild desert after several years of fierce fighting, the insurgents still loved it, and were still proud of having defended it so staunchly. In future years, or even future centuries, if some enemy should try to conquer this region, it would be most hindered by the blood shed by the soldiers of UPA in defence of this beautiful Ukrainian land.

The soldiers felt very much at a loss. On the other side of the border, when a soldier met enemy troops he fired a round at them from his automatic, but here they did not know what to do. This was a foreign country. It was not the responsibility

of the UPA company to defend it and they felt no hostility toward the civilian population or the troops.

Cleaning their boots by the stream, some men washed their shirts, everyone shaved, and the detachment set out on its way in the afternoon. Had this raid begun two months ago, it would have looked entirely different. Each commander would have had a military map, the men would have had better uniforms, and the raid itself would have taken less time. Now only two commanders had military maps and even these did not cover the whole territory. Heavy machine-guns and spare ammunition could not be left behind, but when marching with them the weary insurgents could not advance more than 10 to 20 kilometers a day. Now the company marched through the woods and mountains in a southwesterly direction, heading for Pryashiv. Leaving the frontier far behind and marching during the day, they did not meet a single individual. The company rested often and then continued its march, keeping on throughout the night. At dawn the men halted for several hours to rest and sleep.

The soldiers had gotten used to the march, but yesterday's potato calories had been a bit disappointing. Their heads now began to spin again and everybody thought about food. At that moment one of the guards reported that cherries were growing farther along in the forest, and the captain permitted the detachment to go there. The officers took care of internal security while the soldiers picked cherries. They were relatively sweet and so found their way, pits and all, into empty stomachs. Satisfying their hunger with the cherries, the company continued on its way, and after two hours of marching they halted near a village in the grove. Even though this was another country, the village was no different from Ukrainian villages in the Lemky region. Only the language, although similar to Ukrainian, could not be readily understood.

This grove was designated as a rallying point, and the company set out for the village. Chumak's squad stopped between two small houses. He reminded his soldiers that they were on a propaganda mission and sent half the squad into one house, while he and the other half entered the smaller house by the stream.

"Good evening mistress!" greeted the insurgents.

"To your health," answered a somewhat confused woman in Slovak. On a plank shelf behind a huge stove there stood

several earthen pots and several large but flat loaves of bread resembling pies. These loaves hypnotized the men and prevented their looking further around the house in order to familiarize themselves with the customs and way of life in this country. After they asked the woman politely to give them something to eat, she spread out her hands, said that she was rather poor and had nothing good to eat in the house. When Buk pointed to the bread on the shelf, the woman took the bread in both hands, broke it in two across her knee, and turned to Buk, "Look how dark it is; you won't eat it for sure."

Buk took one half, broke off a good piece, took a bite, and shook his head to indicate that it was very good. Pleased that the guests did not scorn her black bread, the woman gave each of them a pint of milk and took another loaf of bread from the shelf. The men ate with gusto and the good Slovak woman watched them. Then she caught her face in both hands and said with astonishment, "How hungry you are!"

She told them in her beautiful Slovak that Ukrainian guerrillas had been in her house in 1945 but they had not been that hungry. The insurgents had not seen milk or bread for several weeks, except when some soldier captured a piece of bread in a fight, but to satisfy their present hunger they would require several weeks of good regular nourishment. Now this bread and milk tasted better than any they had previously eaten, and these men had eaten bread from more than one oven. So as not to overload their empty stomachs, Chumak ordered his men to march back to the rallying point and asked the woman for a bit more food for the road. She took another loaf from the shelf and brought some butter and cheese from the pantry. Her husband brought some potatoes in a sack. The insurgents thanked them warmly, explaining why they were so hungry, and then left the house. The squads were assembling on the road and marching into the woods. Some soldiers had already gotten sick after the first good supper in Slovakia. When the captain saw this, he ordered a march immediately, for exercise was the only thing that could help the starved stomachs to function. Doctor Zubenko marched on the side and told Chumak about his supper.

"God have mercy!" he said. "An empty stomach, and here you have cherries in the afternoon and two quart of sour

milk and then bread, bacon, and garlic at night. One can make a bomb of it."

After marching for several hours, the company rested, and then started again in the morning. Here the terrain was woody and hilly, but the hills were passable almost everywhere. The villages were few and far between but many sheep and cattle with bells were grazing in the mountain valleys.

The Beskyd mountain range was like a thermometer. The northern, Ukrainian, side of the mountains, with huge primeval forests and rushing brooks, had less fertile soil. The spring and summer were shorter there. The southern part, thanks to the angle of the sun, was very different. At a time when only oats and potatoes grew in the north, one could often see grapes and other plants growing in the south.

The soldiers were beginning to feel refreshed. Slovak sheep, cheese, and milk had done their work. The marches were slower and not so long; there was more rest and the men began to come to themselves. They now felt as missionaries of the Ukrainian cause and were very proud of their activities.



CHAPTER THIRTY THREE

Moscow was now beginning to rage even more. It was most afraid that the soldiers of UPA were going to tell the truth about the real state of the peoples subjugated by Russia, that they would expose the lies with which it had been deceiving the whole world. Time was running out. In several weeks the freedom fighters not only from Ukraine but from all Eastern Europe would reach the West and break the spell of Bolshevik propaganda, for the support of which Moscow was spending 20% of its annual budget. Although an agreement among three countries, Russia, Poland, and the CSSR, had been signed with the aim of destroying the UPA detachments and preventing them from reaching the West and mobilizing hundreds of thousands of troops and other units against them, it had not been successful as yet and Russia was still

apprehensive. She was trying at all costs to prevent even one member of UPA from reaching the West. With that aim in mind, hundreds of anti-guerrilla experts were coming from Moscow to Prague and were haphazardly trying to organize the Czech Communists.

In the Prague Communist Parliament, out-and-out debates were being conducted. Some of the more daring members were defending the UPA detachments but they were condemned by the staunch Communists.

Other UPA companies were now reaching the Slovak territories. The detachments commanded by Brodych, Burlaka, Lastivka, and Krylach had already been there. The Slovak population and their national underground helped the UPA detachments as much as they could. One evening a patriotic Slovak teacher entertained the entire staff of Hromenko's company at his home. After a short discussion he climbed on a horse and left to take up contact with his own people. Returning in two hours, he brought several military maps and other information for the commander. He also reported the successful propaganda activities of Burlaka's company, saying that Burlaka's company had disarmed several Communist police stations and that the insurgents were quartering in villages and singing Ukrainian insurgent songs.

Hromenko's detachment continued to march through large forests during the day and to pass through the open fields from one forest to the other at night. One day two Slovak women came to the forest where the company was camping and seeing over one hundred armed men, they realized immediately that these were Ukrainian guerrillas. Both women were very pretty and it was almost a pity that they covered their nice bodies with their kerchiefs and long wide skirts. They had beautiful eyes, rosy cheeks, and they looked very much alike; perhaps they were sisters. In conversation, however, it turned out that they were mother and daughter. They told the company that the whole Slovak nation was now talking about the thousands of Ukrainian Bandera followers in Slovakia. While the daughter was shyly looking at some insurgents, the mother asked them, "Are you hungry?"

At night the company had to cross from one forest to the other through an open field and across the railroad tracks. Therefore the men were not planning to go into the village that day. Quartermaster Sokolenko told the pretty Slovak

woman that the soldiers were a bit hungry and immediately wanted to know why she was asking. The woman replied that she could bring the insurgents bread from the village. In line with partisan tactics it would have been best to detain the women in the forest until evening and to let them go shortly before the company's departure. But these women not only looked pretty, they also looked honest and to convince themselves of it the men let them go to the village with several mushrooms. This whole procedure looked rather strange, even ungentlemanly. Here was a company of healthy men who could enter the village fearlessly and bring back the food, yet they permitted the women to do it for them. There was no urgent reason to go since the soldiers already had a supply of food in their bags.

The company's objective was to cross into West Germany without much ado, and to keep away from the fighting, which here had absolutely no sense. Moreover, the liquidation of some military unit could be used by the enemy as propaganda against the UPA detachments and might set the people against them.

For supper, the cooks made black Slovak coffee with sugar. Then they prepared to start out, but suddenly the guard reported that he had stopped three women who were bringing a lot of bread wrapped in cloth. The women were allowed inside the camp. This made a very good impression upon the soldiers, because it proved that the terrible Communist propaganda had no influence on the population here and that the people were on the side of UPA.

The bread was divided among the men. Quartermaster Sokolenko kissed the pretty mother and daughter in gratitude and all went on their way, the women to the village and the detachment on its march.

Several days later, the company was resting in the wood near a nice clearing not far from Kruhlica Mountain. Chumak sent Buk into the forest on the other side of the clearing to stand sentry. Buk, who had no idea what fear was, this time went beyond the limits of caution. He came out into the clearing and began to pick berries. Suddenly several shots were fired and Buk fell to the ground dead. This was the company's first casualty on Slovak territory. Thus fell one of the best men in the company, killed by Czech troops who were already trailing the insurgents.

Climbing the high Kruhlica Mountain, which was quite exhausting, the soldiers halted in the woods near a pretty village on a hill. In the afternoon the men washed, shaved, polished their boots and weapons, and then went to visit the village. Going about a kilometer through an open field, the detachment approached the village. Suddenly an officer of the Slovak police showed himself from behind a furrow near the first house. He began to speak to the company's patrol in a friendly manner. The company halted, with their machine-guns already in place. The range of retreat was very bad, and in the event of a fight the only thing to do was to capture the village in a quick attack. Beyond the furrow lay a group of about sixty policemen who were charged with defending this village.

Seeing that the insurgents were ready for action, the police officer began to speak in a raised and shaky voice.

"We don't want to fight with you. Please don't come to this village. If we let you in, we'll be punished."

"And what will happen if we capture the village?" asked Com. Lahidnyy, adding, "We are not coming to fight with you, we are coming to visit you."

"There are many villages in this area and you don't have to come to this one. Another village is two kilometers away, and there is no guard there."

"All right," replied Lahidnyy, "tell your people that we did not come to Slovakia to fight."

"Goodbye!" was said by both sides and the company left for the forest. Marching slowly in the direction of the forest, they thought about this honest but poor Slovak officer. "I wonder what awaits him tomorrow from his Communist government?" thought Chumak. In the Soviet Union, for pulling something like this he would earn twenty years in Solovky.

Several hours later the company visited another village. The insurgents had eaten very well and had received some extra food for the road. By way of thanks they sang several stirring Ukrainian songs.

In theory the company was marching west but in practice the men zigzagged by going southwest once and then northwest, often bypassing high mountains in a semicircle and sometimes, in order to cover their tracks, turning in a completely opposite direction. Now the detachment had to conquer

high mountains which became ever harder to climb. To the young soldiers of the company, now a bit better fed, these mountains added a kind of romanticism, but they presented a real problem for the sick and the wounded, who all this time had been enough of a problem for the detachment. Even though they were given good care and compassion, their very presence in the company decreased the fighting and the marching capacity of the detachment. In addition, the company's chaplain, the beloved Father Kadylo, had fallen ill. He was over fifty but now looked much older. His temperature rose every day and he had a pain in his chest. Com. Hromenko talked to him for some time. They examined a military map and looked in the southwardly direction. Three other sick men were called to them. Father Kadylo then said goodbye to all, and with a bag carrying his vestments, an automatic across his chest, and tears in his eyes, he went down to a parsonage while three insurgents hopped behind him. The chaplain's departure had a depressing effect upon the men. What was in store for this missionary of the Church, a Ukrainian fighter, and political tactician? The Russian Communists were afraid of people like him. Would the church authorities of this country be able to save him?

At night the company went to "inspect" a sheep farm. Here on a high plateau there stood a small mountain cottage and a large stable, with a tile roof and a fence around it. Three young Slovak girls and two older men were milking sheep by hand. Now the soldiers could have a good laugh. Platoon commander Bartel helped to milk one sheep, and Petya brought another one, with horns, for Doctor Zubenko, who probably had a close look at a sheep for the first time in his life. He searched for the udder for a long time and the men laughed, for this was a ram. The soldiers ate some cheese, drank some sheep's milk, and joked with the merry girls, while some inspected the production of various cheeses. Then, thanking the hospitable Slovaks, the company went on, visiting a dozen or so similar farms in Slovakia. The farms were of various sizes, ranging from those with about 200 sheep to others that had over a thousand. There were different kinds of cheese, with different names. It was all very tasty but a bit difficult to digest.

Four weeks of marching through Slovakia had already passed, but not a great distance had been covered. Here the

mountains were harder to climb and often, after marching a whole day, they would find out that the company had reached a deep stream which it was impossible to cross. The weather was good and the countryside beautiful. Former scouts-revolutionaries could only dream about such an outing while camping in the Ukrainian Carpathians.

So far the enemy was not frightening, especially in comparison with the hell they had gone through four weeks ago. It seemed quiet and peaceful in these beautiful Slovak mountains, which were not far from the Lower Tatra Mountain and the city of Poprad. In the valleys and towns it looked quite different. Moscow was raging. The entire Czech administration, police, and army had been alerted against the UPA detachments. They were allotted tanks and artillery, and each crossing or path had been barricaded, as well as all fords and river ferry crossings. Parliament continued to debate the subject of the dangerous UPA "bands," and the entire Communist press was unrestrained in its slander of the UPA. Thousands of Czech troops were sent into the forests against these terrible Bandera followers. This whole campaign in the press and at Communist rallies had been unsuccessful so far, for almost the entire Slovak nation was wholeheartedly on the side of the UPA and the enemy could do nothing to destroy them at this time.

The company again camped in a large mountain valley near a sheep farm. Feasting on good cheese and sheep's milk, the soldiers were in good spirits. In a large Slovak hut five men, five cheerful girls, and two women were living now. The men sang insurgents songs, the echo of which could be heard as far as the Lower and the Higher Tatra Mountains. An older Slovak took out an accordion and began to play some merry Slovak tunes. Some insurgents began to dance with the women and others danced a Cossack dance. In the beginning the two older women were having the best time, but later on, growing bolder, the girls also began to dance, going from partner to partner. Now not only the talkers and the jokers, of which each squad had its share, were dancing but even the "serious" who did not say much and often had an ironic grin on their faces. The Slovak women were very popular. Passing along a giggly girl to Petya, Chumak stood in the corner all out of breath and began to smoke. An old Slovak was standing in another corner smoking a pipe. His facial

expression and eyes looked very wise and he watched the dancing insurgents with admiration. Chumak came up to him, shook his hand and they began to talk.

"What kind of people are you?" asked the Slovak and without waiting for an answer continued, "Today I returned from the valley. I had been to Poprad. There a large raid is being prepared against you. I saw tens of tanks and hundreds of passing trucks with troops. Everyone talks about the Bandera followers. The townspeople are installing double locks, for Communist propaganda has it that you are shooting the civilian population."

"And what do you think of us?" asked Chumak.

The Slovak took out his pipe, smiled, and instead of answering asked again, "What makes you so strong? Which one of you is Bandera? I would like to see him."

Chumak smiled. The Slovak thought that this was a great secret and that Chumak wouldn't tell him who Bandera was. The question made Chumak think. He had never seen Bandera either, and he would have liked to see him. He had heard a great deal about Bandera, Stetsko, Lebed, Shankovskyy, Shukhevych, and others, but he had never had a chance to see any of them. Who were these people who had changed the course of political thinking throughout Eastern Europe? They talked about Bandera followers in Moscow, in Siberia, and in every country in Eastern Europe. But the Russians and Czechs were now dedicated Communists, and they should have been most grateful for their existence to Roosevelt, Truman, and Hitler. In other satellite countries the "loyalty" to Communism was maintained only with Russian bayonets. If Ukraine had at least one free neighbouring country and some moral support, the struggle of Ukraine and other subjugated nations could have been successful.

The slogan "Freedom for nations, freedom for individuals!" was spreading each day. Distant raids of UPA detachments into various countries were gaining more and more supporters, and the ABN grew in strength. The heirs of Peter I in Moscow were well aware of this and for this reason they combatted the UPA detachments with such rage. And the UPA units were everywhere — in Rumania, Yugoslavia, Hungary, Slovakia, Czechia, Poland, Byelorussia, East Prussia, and throughout Ukraine, as well as with thousands of arrested revolutionaries, including the clergy, throughout Siberia.

They held their heads up proudly and disseminated our ideas, adding to the strength of ABN. Even the Cold War was thought up by the Bolsheviks to conceal the revolutionary movements in their colonial countries. With the help of the propaganda campaign by UPA and ABN, the myth of Communism was disappearing like camphor, while the Russians had only bayonets left with which to save their empire.

The Slovak with a pipe left the musing Chumak and joined some other insurgents. Chumak went outside the hut and sat on a fence made of thick planks, behind which hundreds of sheep were confined. He gazed at the Slovak hills, which could be seen for dozens of kilometers, thinking about the Slovak's words, "What makes you so strong... Which one of you is Bandera?" Now Chumak tried to find an answer for himself. "Has not the chivalry of Svyatoslav and of the free Cossacks been revived in us?" He thought about Mikhnovskyy, Konovalets, and Petlyura, then paused for a long time over the trials of the leaders of OUN in Warsaw. He now recalled how he, as a civilian in 1941, had helped to take packages of literature across the Syan. "How many of our revolutionaries have crossed the border? How many of them have perished there? How many had greeted the long-awaited Germans, and then felt such terrible disappointment and hatred toward them when the Germans proved to be the conquerors of our land. How many UPA soldiers have died while fighting the Germans? A sense of bitterness and a sort of hatred toward the Americans flared up in Chumak, for they not only had saved the Russian empire, but had helped to expand it and had extradited thousands of Ukrainian and other emigrants to the Russians. The Russians murdered a large part of them and deported the rest to Siberia. "And where should we look for allies," thought Chumak, "if not among these Slovaks with pipes, and there are so many of them, and among other subjugated nations?"

The whistle of the duty officer interrupted the music and dancing and Chumak's thoughts. The company was getting ready to march on. Only Rubakha took a bit longer to say goodbye to the older Slovak woman, who was packing a large piece of cheese and a can of tobacco in his bag.

After an hour's march it was too dark to see anything more than a few feet away. Walking through the forest, the company reached a clearing and began to cross it. Hromenko's

company still numbered about one hundred soldiers and the single file took up the whole clearing. The first squad was already in the woods on the other side of the clearing while the last was just coming out of the forest. Suddenly, Czech troops from the side headed directly at the passing company. Someone in the front was lighting his way with a small flashlight and was already approaching the company. The Czech detachment could not pass, for the UPA detachment blocked its way. The only thing to do was for the front part of the company to go ahead into the forest and for the rear to return to the forest from which they had started to emerge. While the Czech detachment was approaching the passing company, not knowing that it was the UPA company, Com. Hromenko ran up to the mid-section of his company, at the very place where the Czechs were approaching, and ordered, "Down in position, quietly!" No more than three or four steps from the company, Com. Hromenko asked in Czech, "Who is it?"

The patrol was taken aback by the fact that on such a night somebody was lying on the ground in the clearing and quickly he summoned the detachment's captain. The UPA company was lying in position and, having the "enemy" before it in a single file, was in a much better position than the Czech unit.

The captain of the Czech detachment came up front. He shone his light and saw Com. Hromenko with a hand stretched out in greeting, while Petya with an automatic was standing at his side ready to fire. Seeing two UPA officers and also the insurgents lying on the ground, the captain, white as chalk, gave his hand to Hromenko and Petya.

"Don't be afraid," said Commander Hromenko in Czech. "We are not going to hurt you, just ask your entire unit to come closer." The Czech officer ordered his detachment to approach while Com. Hromenko sent an order down the line, "Ring." The right and left flanks moved up front and in a minute the Czech unit was surrounded by a strong ring. The company commander continued to talk with the pale officer, who was ever more conscious of his precarious situation. Tomorrow he would have to report to his superiors, and what would he tell them? Here he was surrounded by an UPA detachment in his own country and he could not do a thing. As it turned out, he did not want to do anything, but he was

afraid of agents in his own detachment. Com. Hromenko and Lahidnyy were now talking to him frankly.

"The situation of our people is the same as of your people, but you don't understand this as yet for you have had no time to get acquainted with Russian imperialism. Tomorrow you are going to be greatly disappointed and it's up to you what action you are going to take. We did not come here to establish our order, but to warn you about your Russian liberators."

Commandant Petya and his comrades now began to work "professionally." Each member of SB called one man to the side and asked how many among them were Communists, who were the agents, and so forth. It turned out that the Czech detachment had only a few agents, not many Communists, and that Slovaks predominated in the detachment. These Slovaks asked Com. Hromenko to order the execution of the agents. In the meantime the supply department was doing a more practical job. The insurgents were exchanging rifles, automatics, and machine-guns with the Czechs. They "borrowed" grenades and some even dressed Czech soldiers as guerrillas and put Czech uniforms on themselves. Some handed weapons with one bullet or even empty to the Czechs. At the end Com. Hromenko addressed the Czech detachment.

"Friends and neighbours, Czechs and Slovaks! Communist propaganda hammers into you each day that we are bandits and criminals. Some of you have told us that there are Russian agents among you and you have begged us to execute them. This is not our country but yours, and you yourselves should fight for freedom and order in it. And the sooner you do this the better, for otherwise the Russian Communists are going to press their yoke upon you so strongly that you will find it hard to free yourselves from it."

The meeting between the two "hostile" armies lasted for over two hours. Even though the Czech detachment was the enemy, the UPA company did not let them feel like captives. During the exchange of views, the insurgents told the Czechs that they were fighting for the freedom of nations and individuals, they recounted their successful battles against barbaric Communist Russia and they called upon the Czech soldiers to prevent the wild Russian hordes from ruling a civilized country like Czechia. The Czechs in turn told the insurgents where the Czech military forces were concentrated, where the Russian detachments were stationed, the location

of Czech ambushes at various crossing points, and their orders against the UPA detachments. Com. Hromenko received military maps as a present from the Czech captain and Lahidnyy in turn presented him with Ukrainian liberation literature. The company commander ordered the company to break the encirclement and to assume their positions in a single file. The officers of both detachments shook hands, saluted, and the Czech detachment departed. The company assumed a fighting position and pointed its weapons in the direction of the departing Czechs. The Czechs could have fired several shots at the company, if for no other reason than to be able to report it to their superiors, but they did not fire. They now held a different opinion about these "terrible" Bandera followers about whom they had heard so much from Communist propaganda. The propaganda which was drummed into them now burst like a soap bubble. Those terrible "bandits" turned out to be their friends, not enemies, who in addition had awakened their national pride.

"I feel sorry for that Czech captain, Popovyc," said Commander Lahidnyy during a halt.

"And what about their agents, who returned without arms and without their secret documents containing notes on almost every soldier in this Czech company?" asked Petya, pointing to the captured pistols and bags.



CHAPTER THIRTY FOUR

A warm, fair-weathered, and relatively dry July helped the UPA detachments in their march through Slovakia. The company now marched only by day, crossing deep streams whose waters were rushing down quickly from the hills. Here one could often see beautiful waterfalls which often served as showers for the insurgents. Leaving behind such a waterfall and a deep, clear lake full of trout, the company found itself at the foot of a high mountain. After climbing this mountain for over six hours, often on all fours, by evening the company reached its peak, where only dwarf pines were growing. From here the view was beautiful. Twenty kilometers ahead and slightly to the left, one could see the town of Poprad. Not far to the left were the high Tatra Mountains, dark green at the foothills and covered with patches of snow

at the top. Near these mountains, just across the border, lay the town of Zakopane, and platoon leader Bartel proposed that the company go there for a rest. Upon being asked whether or not he had a foreign visa and a passport, he merely pointed to his automatic.

Just ahead lay the Slovak Lower Tatra Mountains, not very high, but extremely rocky. The mountain peaks had the appearance of a gigantic Gothic church with thousands of towers of various sizes. Even these towers were of different colors, some white, some yellow, and others red. This panorama was beautiful to look at, and no insurgent would ever forget it. He was also to remember the hardships encountered in crossing the Tatra Mountains.

At present the company proceeded very slowly. After two days of marching the company reached a large valley, where there was a small town and an ancient castle. Several military vehicles were parked by the castle, indicating who had been staying here. A long parkway lined with trees on both sides of the road led to the castle. Five insurgents, Petya, Zhurba, Chumak, Shum, and Zayats, paid a visit to the castle, approaching the main entrance with drawn weapons but finding the doors wide open. Inside, the proletarian intelligentsia was having an orgy. Shum and Zayats stayed behind to stand sentry, while the other three entered. Seeing the insurgents, eight well-fed men became very frightened and four pretty, half-naked girls left their partners and went to the other side of the large room and sat down in armchairs. The insurgents smiled to themselves, while the Communist faces become paler with each passing moment. Only the unfrightened phonograph continued to blaze to out some Russian song. Now Petya began talking to the men, Zhurba started to joke with the girls, and Chumak turned off the record player and began to look at the records which were lying near it. He came across one which, ironically, sounded as follows: "I don't know another such place where a man breathes so freely." Chumak tossed it out the window. Now two servants of the Communist masters were filling sacks for the insurgents with cigarettes, sugar, bread, and American chocolate. Zhurba went to the counter and ordered three cherry brandies. A Russian NKVD colonel turned to the servant and said, "Let him have it!"

"Not let him have it, but you give it to him!" said Zhurba. "If this were in Ukraine I would show you where the crabs

are wintering!" The colonel poured out three glasses and the bottle knocked against the glass, spilling the brandy. Petya took a huge portrait of Stalin from the wall, while Chumak wrote a receipt, certifying that an UPA detachment had taken over such and such goods. Usually quartermaster Sokolenko paid for purchases from the company treasury. The cash-box still contained about fifteen dollars, several thousand rubles, several hundred Polish zlotys, and some Czech crowns, but in a case like this, a receipt was sufficient for propaganda purposes. At present these vacationing Communists were locked in one room, the telephone was cut, and the girls were told not to drive, for the road had been mined. The men left.

The place through which the company had just marched was called High Tatras on the map. Although these mountains were very high and covered with trees, it was still possible to pass through them, albeit slowly. After marching through them for several days the company came to the vicinity of Zakopane. The men had averaged only a few dozen kilometres a day, and it seemed as if they were still in the same place. In spite of the fact that the soldiers felt very sure of themselves while marching and were having a wonderful trip, which they had not expected, the march presented difficulties for the company's command. The terrain was unfamiliar and in some areas command lacked military maps. Now the mountains became more difficult to cross and all passes and paths were guarded by enemy patrols. According to Com. Hromenko's planning, the detachment should have turned south near the town of Poprad. To the north stretched impossible mountains, in front was the large town of Poprad, and to the left, in a southerly direction, stretched large forests and hills. In order to pass to the south of Poprad it was necessary to cross the valley, through which cut the river, the railroad, and the highway. This ravine was very deep and its sides were impassable except for three paths. The ravine was over thirty kilometers long. The enemy was more or less aware that UPA detachments were passing through these forests and large outposts had been stationed along these passages. All the men in Hromenko's company were now talking about the three paths.

"I wonder what the 'old man' is going to do now?" Smyk asked Chumak, referring to Commander Hromenko, who was only 28.

Marching along the right bank of this terrible ravine, the detachment had already bypassed two narrow paths which led in a downward direction. A scouting party was sent on each path to observe from the top the great military movement on the road and the entrenched machine-gun nests beyond the river. The company's position was grim. To return and to bypass this ravine by way of high mountains would require several days and this could not be risked because of the shortage of food, which was unobtainable in these desolate mountains. The commander continued to lead the company nearer and nearer the town. In the evening the company halted on top of a high mountain, from which the lights of the town could be seen very well. Looking at the bright glitter, the insurgents thought of the good old days.

"There is a bath, hot water, clean clothes, good food, and soft beds," said medical assistant Zirka, looking down at the town.

Squad leader Loza interrupted him at this point. "Why worry? We'll be there tomorrow!"

"Are you crazy?" asked Zirka.

"Where else can we go? To the right are the Tatras, to the left that devilish ravine, and up front a good road leading across town." Zirka could not decide whether Loza was joking or not.

In the daytime the town looked even better than at night. It was situated on level ground, between huge cliffs. There were several churches, many old buildings, a beautiful park, and a lake. Beyond the high-rising gap was the terrible ravine, with the noise of fast-rushing water and the military formations and trucks moving in the other direction. Here the enemy had put out a strong front. On the line of Poprad, Nove Selo, and Koshytsi they had blockaded every crossing, for they planned this to be the end of the raiding UPA detachments. Looking down from the mountain top, the view was indeed frightening. If one were to call some general and ask for an expert's opinion, he would probably reply, "Here one needs airplanes, artillery, and several thousand troops in order to break through this line, while the only thing you can do is to find a path, raise a white flag from this cliff, and march into town."

Com. Hromenko held an entirely different opinion. After viewing this beautiful valley through his binoculars, he took

out his military map and marked something on it, then joined the men and began to joke with them.

About midnight, the company started on its way again, taking a narrow path down the cliffs, and marching to town. Although from the top the ravine seemed to be only a stone's throw away, the descent by a winding path took nearly three hours. Coming down the mountain, the detachment turned a bit left and marched between the houses of the suburbs and the town itself, always in the direction of the river and the highways. After crossing the footbridge over the river, the company moved to the forested foothills of a high mountain. The only resistance was put up by barking dogs.

It was already a beautiful morning by the time they left the last houses and entered the forest. In order to be as far away from the town as possible, the detachment turned left in the forest. Happy at crossing the terrible ravine without firing a single shot, the soldiers began talking rather loud. Suddenly a signal order, shown by a raised hand and a finger on the lips, meaning silence, was sent out from the front and continued down the line. Between the path and ravine hundreds of military tents, filled with sleeping enemy troops, could be seen, other troops lay in positions along the three paths, ready to greet any approaching UPA detachment with fire. Looking at the tents, the UPA men smiled. How strange was this enemy. He prepared himself against UPA detachments with such determination, even when the company turned in another direction. Now the company could have completely destroyed the sleeping enemy garrison, but instead it turned right and continued in a westerly direction.

Not all detachments managed to cross this terrible ravine, however, and dozens of insurgents from various companies perished in it.

Now they marched southwest in the direction of Banska Bystrica, and in a few days turned in the direction of Zhilina. The detachment continued to enjoy the assistance and confidence of the Slovak people. After years of bondage, this small, honest nation, with its ancient culture, perhaps because of its several years of independence in recent years, was putting up good resistance. It did not cringe before the Russians, but almost in its entirety supported the Subjugated Nations Bloc. This friendship had been reinforced by several UPA detachments passing through their country in the past.

Things looked quite different, however, when the detachment approached the territories inhabited by the Czechs. This nation, whose culture and civilization ranked with the best in the world, was now regressing at a quick pace. Almost all the Czech people, like a submissive dog, now crawled before Moscow. The mass destruction of their thousand-year-old civilization, allegedly a stumbling block to Communism, had already begun. The old cultural elite had been arrested en masse and executed. Technicians and machinery had been taken to Russia as reimbursement for "liberation" and in each city huge statues of Stalin and street signs in Russian had been given to Czechs as a present from "big brother."

Besides the high mountains and gorges which had to be overcome by the UPA detachments, there were also large rivers. One evening the men were marching toward a river which on the map was indicated as a narrow blue line and was called Vah. Approaching it long after midnight, the company expected to find a river several metres broad but suddenly what seemed like a sea came into view. The moon shone on a quiet stretch of water, and one could not see the other bank. Com. Petya stood there dumbfounded. Taking off his cap, he scratched his head and said, "Either I'm stupid or my geography teacher was. He never taught me about any sea in Slovakia."

It seemed that the captain was lacking a military map for he did not know whether they should march left or right. He finally decided to go right. They marched for over an hour at a quick pace, but the "sea" did not change in width. There was water and more water as far as the eye could see. In the east it was beginning to get lighter. They had now gone too far to return to the forest, while to cross this huge expanse of water was impossible.

"Down on the double!" came the order. Running along the water for about three kilometers, they saw some large buildings and between them a huge bridge. The buildings were a large electric power-station and the bridge passed over the dam. The company, in full military preparedness, rushed among the buildings and headed for the bridge, while several people watched them through the glass doors of the building. The detachment quickly crossed the bridge and resumed their fast march. According to the map, there were several groves on this side of the water and the men would have to



stay in one of them throughout the day. In the event of a fight in such terrain, however, because of the small stores of ammunition one could expect an end to this courageous detachment.

Well secured by sentinels, the company quietly slept through the day and in the evening sent four insurgents to the village to search for food. It was clear that Com. Hromenko had outwitted the enemy, who still concentrated all its activity in the Poprad forest. The Czech press raved about the fierce fighting with Burlaka's detachment. This determined and proud UPA officer, convincing himself of the Czech regiments' inability to fight, moved at will with the remainder of his battalion as he had done in the Peremyshl region in the past. He moved through villages, made good propaganda, and engaged in many battles.

Late at night, one of the scouts who had been sent for food returned, but the other three did not. This one scout had escaped only by a miracle. In the town, each Czech was armed in order to combat Bandera followers. At first the villagers spoke politely to the men but before long several threw themselves upon one insurgent, bound him, and handed him over to the police.

"I entered a house," recalled the food scout, "and asked for bread or other food, explaining who we were and for what we were fighting. A Czech woman cut a thin slice of bread and sent me to the neighbouring house for more food. On approaching the neighbouring house, I heard fighting and shots. At the same time rifle shots were fired in my direction from behind the corner of the house. Nothing more could be done here, so I went back to the first house and ordered the woman to put into the sack these three loaves of bread, which I had seen on the shelf, and ran with them to the detachment."

It was about thirty kilometres from the grove where the company was now staying to a larger forest. The detachment had go to the forest at once, so they set out for the road.



CHAPTER THIRTY FIVE

The Russians saw the ineffective activity of the entire Czech army, so they turned to the dedicated Communists among the Czech people. They armed them well and, like the Polish Communist henchmen, they did the bidding of "older brother." It was these bands who destroyed a large part of small UPA units and detachments.

Only a few days ago in Slovakia, the UPA detachment had felt itself at home as though it were in Ukraine. While intelligence and food were easy to obtain from the good Slovak people, in Czech territory the UPA felt itself to be in a completely different and hostile country. A Slovak woman would give a loaf or two of bread with a smile, but a Czech woman would cut off a tiny piece and stare at the insurgents as if they were bandits. The enemy took advantage of Ukra-

inian honesty. Instead of taking a head of cattle here and there or bread from a bakery and going on their way, the insurgents ordered that food be collected from door to door, hoping thus to avoid getting a bad name. In the meantime Czech Communists murdered UPA collectors with sticks and axes. Smaller UPA groups which passed here received full support from the Slovak people but lost their lives after entering Czech territory. It was impossible to warn them beforehand, for in this region there were no contacts between UPA detachments.

Leaving behind long stretches of woods, the company now passed through great open areas between the woods at night. On one such clear night the men halted near some railroad tracks. An express train going in the direction of Banska Bystrica approached, while the soldiers sat on the embankment almost within arms' reach of the train. A luxurious train with first-class cars and opened windows passed by, and they could see the Communist masters and many army officers launing in comfortable chairs. The men longed to send a round from their automatics along the open windows of the train. Letting the train go by, the company crossed the tracks and moved rapidly in the direction of the Morava River.

After two hours of fast marching, the men halted on the bank of the river, where the water was very deep. A good swimmer of the company undressed, jumped into the water, tested its depth, and swam to the shore. The water was dirty and smelly and four meters deep. Marching beside the river, the detachment soon spied a raft. Here it was very quiet, there was no enemy outpost on this side, but the raft was secured by a large padlock. Several insurgents examined it, but they had nothing with which to break open this padlock and they dared not shoot and make a noise. The C.O. sent several insurgents up the river to check the possibility of crossing. In fifteen minutes the scouting party returned, saying that it was possible to cross farther up river. The detachment started out and in several minutes stopped near some large rocks. The company combat-engineers again tested the river, finding large rocks in water that was one and a half meters deep and very swift. With the help of strong rope, reinforced by belts, the company made its way to the other side. Many large rocks lay across the river. Perhaps there had

been a bridge here or somebody had been manipulating something during the war. Between these rocks rushed swift water, taking with it several insurgent coats and caps. But the detachment reached the other side without mishap and continued on its way.

Another march by such a large body of men was becoming more difficult and dangerous. It became necessary to separate. A small group was led away by platoon commander Bartel, and the company, now reduced in numbers, marched on. Now they passed through large treeless, Moravian plains, similar to the Ukrainian steppes which had no forests. Marching by the city of Brno, the company found itself at daybreak in an open field. As far as one could see, there was a field filled with various kinds of vegetables. Along the main highway linking Brno with Czeske Budeyovicy, there was a large field of tobacco and here the company decided to camp. The tobacco, growing a meter and a half in height, provided good cover for the men. The tobacco was already ripening and some lower leaves were completely dry. From them the soldiers made cigars, smoking some and saving others for the road. A small brook flowed through the field, supplying the company with fresh water.

Military units passed along the main highway without realizing that those whom they were pursuing, but did not really want to find, were only a few meters away from the road. After a few hours, the tobacco itself became the company's worst enemy. When the company was ready to set out on the road again, it was hard to rouse the men who were sleeping in the tobacco plants. The strong smell of tobacco had intoxicated them to the point where scarcely anyone could stand up on his feet. The insurgents crawled out of the tobacco on all fours. Half an hour of strenuous exercises and deep breathing was necessary to put the company back on its feet.

For reasons of safety the company did not enter the villages in this region. All sorts of vegetables and fruits grew in the fields. Some insurgents found it strange that they could not go to a village for food. Feeling very sure of themselves they thought it would be easy to get food in the village or to disarm some police station. The Commander, however, would not even let them get salt anywhere, and now all fruit and vegetable soups had to be eaten without it. Commander

Hromenko realized his mission very well: to bring the detachment to the Western world and to tell what the tyrannical Communist system was really like and how staunchly the Ukrainian people were fighting against subjugation. He was also well aware of the fact that Russia was ready to sacrifice a hundred Czech Communists for one member of the UPA in order to prevent these detachments from reaching the West.

The company now marched in the vicinity of Cheske Budeyovice. They had already passed Vienna, not far away to the left, while the Austrian border was only a dozen or so kilometers away.

On very fertile soil the Czechs engaged in an interesting form of agriculture. One night the company passed through fields planted with nothing but onions. After walking for an hour through a field of white onions they crossed to a larger field of purple onions. During a halt the men treated themselves to various kinds of onions, and some baked them, others stewed them, and still others ate them raw. Doctor Zubenko warned the men to be careful with matches near the mouth, lest they set the onion fumes on fire. On the following day there were other delicacies: cucumbers, cabbage, and then more onions.

Averaging several dozen kilometers a day through the Moravian plain, the company was nearing the Czech-German frontier. Here there were well kept forests and all the roads were bordered with fruit trees. Camping in a nicely planted pine forest, once more the company began to feel at home. A large section of the forest was fenced in by a tall wire fence and deer were grazing inside. After marching for more than two weeks on nothing but vegetables without salt, the men now wanted some bread or meat. Chumak and Kukhar jumped over the fence with the intention of catching a deer. Although the deer were very tame and came close to the men, it was impossible to catch them. Blocking the way of one deer in the corner of the fence, the men slowly moved toward it. When the deer had no other way out, it jumped over Chumak and sped into the forest. Since they were not allowed to shoot, the men had to be satisfied with only the sight of meat. While walking through the forest between the deer's mangers covered by roofs, Chumak found something in the manger which was worth more than gold: a chunk of black

salt which had been left behind for the deer. Kukhar went around a few other mangers and found several more kilograms of salt. Soup had been cooking just then and quartermaster Sokolenko himself distributed this booty among the men.

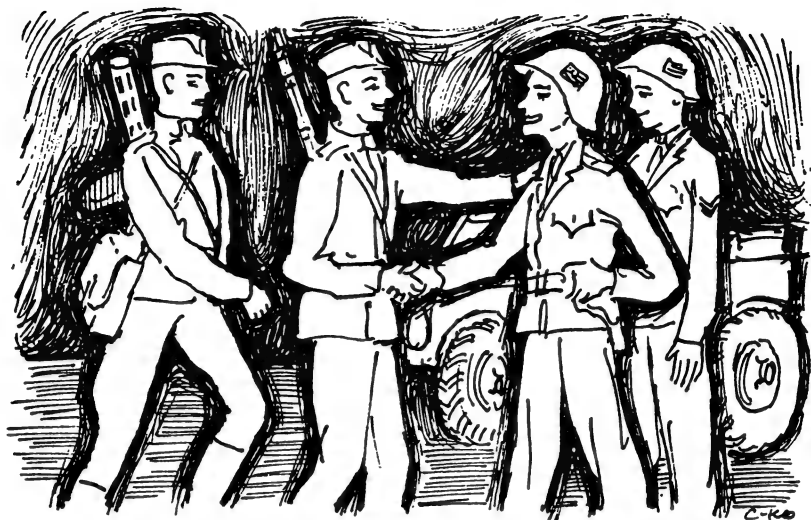
Commander Hromenko watched this procedure and after a while said jokingly, "Sergeant, don't give any salt to Chumak's squad."

"Why not?" asked Chumak in astonishment.

"I think," said the C.O., "that your ration had already been taken care of." The supply sergeant went up to Chumak's cook, opened his bag, and took out a large chunk of salt.

The weather was now beautiful, the men were in good spirits, there were larger and larger forests, and the frontier was not far away.

From the former company, which in past years had numbered over 200 men and through which more than 600 insurgents had passed in the last several years, now only 48 insurgents remained in Hromenko's detachment. Most of the others had laid down their turbulent lives on the altar of the Fatherland which they had loved so much and for which they had fought with such heroism. Almost every company of Zakerzonnya was in a similar state.



CHAPTER THIRTY SIX

Three months had passed since the beginning of the raid into Slovakia. Behind Hromenko's company other companies, which had begun their raid a few days later, marched through Slovakia. Some separated into smaller groups and some were destroyed by enemy garrisons. Commander Bayda and instructor Zoryan also tried to make their way to the West. Many, including Commander Burlaka, were treacherously caught by Czech Communists and delivered to Poland for torture and sure death.

Crossing the Vltava River for the second time, the company came closer to the border each day. Now each insurgent prepared for a final battle at the border. Cleaning not only their weapons but also every single bullet, the company

headed for the border. The Commander was again lacking a map of this region and no one knew for sure how far the frontier was.

The detachment came to a small village, where a middle-aged German was stopped and asked if he would show them the best place to cross the border. The German refused. He was offered a pistol but this did not help either. Only after the quartermaster showed him a few dollar bills did he cheer up and, whistling, set out for the frontier. He was soon quieted by the front guard, and the detachment moved through a pasture near the forest in the direction of the border, ready to wage a fierce battle there. Near the border the German jumped over a small stream, took a cigarette out of his pocket, and began to smoke. By now all the soldiers had jumped over the stream and the Commander asked the German how far it was to the border. The German puffed on his cigarette, exhaled the smoke, and pointed to the stream, saying, "This is the frontier, and we are now in the American Zone of Germany."

The Commander thanked the German, who jumped over the stream again, while the company went away from the border in a westerly direction. After marching two or three kilometers, the detachment posted two sets of sentinels and the remainder of the company went to sleep.

The warm Bavarian sun roused the exhausted insurgents. The cooks had already brought pots of water from the stream for washing and shaving. But there was nothing to cook and quartermaster Sokolenko took the last two dollars from the company treasury and gave them to Commandant Petya, who sent two of his men to a nearby flour mill to buy flour.

The company's grooming now began, and two barbers gave badly needed haircuts to the insurgents. They also began to make shoe polish by mixing ground coal with water. Pavuk maintained that spittle and coal were better, and his boots did shine more than those of the others. Having risen earlier than the others, Commander Hromenko had already shaved and cleaned his clothes. Retreating several dozen steps to a hill, he looked down at his soldiers. This was no longer the great company which had so staunchly and successfully defended the Ukrainian people and their honour, but only a small group. The rest of his men, just as thousands of other Ukrainian patriot-revolutionaries, had given their young lives in defence of their nation, and their graves were scattered

throughout Eastern Europe. Even this small group of 48 men, now busily grooming themselves for an unknown encounter with the Western world, was feeling very sure of itself. Although many had torn boots and uniforms and it was necessary to pull pieces of thread from their shirts in order to mend the holes, the mood of the insurgents was confident and cheerful. Nobody had any military emblems on his uniform or medals of honour pinned on his chest, but if one were to write about the achievements of each man it would fill 48 very interesting volumes. Could anyone have believed, a few years ago, that in the middle of Hitlerite Germany, in a beautiful Bavarian forest, a fully armed UPA company would one day be camping? In the country which had recently conquered one nation after another in several day's time, which had reached Asia and Africa, which dreamt about a colony in Ukraine and which, because of its erroneous policy, had fallen apart like a house of cards, in this country the unconquerable carriers of noble ideas found themselves at this moment.

Pavuk, with a face cut by a dull razor, was now asking if anyone had a tie and cologne, for he had a feeling that he would meet a pretty German girl today. Even the serious Com. Hromenko joined in the general laughter.

Petya's men returned from the mill with several kilograms of flour, part of which was emptied into pots of warm water and the cooks began to make porridge. More wood was put on the fire to make it cook faster, and the cooks stirred the gruel, while many were already waiting with ready mess tins. Pavuk argued that the cooks were overcooking the porridge, but they pointed out that it must first come to a boil.

Commander Lahidnyi and quartermaster Sokolenko joined Com. Hromenko and they all began to look east. Down below stretched a scarcely noticeable narrow stream which in reality was the frontier of an inflated Russian Empire. Between mountains and forests there were scattered villages inhabited mostly by Germans, and farther on were the Czech villages. The Czech people, who not so long ago had fallen victims to Hitler, were now one of the most devoted servants of "older brother," Russia. The slogans "Freedom for Nations and Individuals" and other UPA propaganda, which was readily accepted throughout Eastern Europe, here fell on deaf ears.

The Czechs responded alike, "Why are you running away? The Russians are good people."

Com. Hromenko was now looking in that direction through his binoculars, as if to have a glimpse of Ukraine, though Czechia and Slovakia, where larger and smaller detachments were still engaged in fierce fighting. How many helpless wounded had remained in underground hospitals? And how many insurgents, separated from their companies, were refusing to lay down their arms but were continuing to fight? The three UPA officers stood on top of a hill and looked east. They did not speak, but their thoughts were similar. The first to break the silence was the quartermaster:

"How many archives of our struggle are going to be preserved?"

"They'll be preserved," replied Com. Hromenko. "Part of them by the OUN Leadership in the West, part in the homeland, but the greatest number in the office of the NKVD."

The quartermaster and Lahidnyy joined the detachment, while Commander Hromenko, engrossed in his thoughts, continued to look east, as if having a premonition that in a short time he would again pass through these regions on his way back to Ukraine, where he would die in an unequal fight.

It was getting dark when the company extinguished its fires and continued its journey in the direction of Passau on the Danube. After traveling a dozen or so kilometers, the company halted for the night in a pine forest. Fires were lighted again and the cooks prepared porridge from the remaining flour. The insurgents began to think about their future in the unknown, post-war West.

Somebody spoke dreamily.

"Here in the cities are Ukrainian refugee camps in which several thousand Ukrainian are living. Imagine if several thousand Ukrainians from such camps would join our propaganda raid, with clergy, banners, and flags, and would march through some German towns. What propaganda this would make for our liberation cause."

After supper the Commander ordered an assembly and held a longer address than usual. After a common prayer he reminded his soldiers once more, "Comrades, tomorrow we will most likely have to lay down our arms for some time. But you must always remember about the oath of the soldier of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army, which does not relieve you

of your duties even after you have laid down your arms.”

The following day on the road in the forest near the city of Passau, the soldiers of the UPA were shaking hands with American soldiers stationed on German soil.

THE END

G L O S S A R Y

OF SPECIFIC WORDS, NAMES AND ABBREVIATIONS

ABN (Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations) — an international organization formed in 1943 in the territory of Ukraine by representatives of the liberation movements of nations which fell victim to Russian Bolshevism. The ABN is still active; its Hq. is in the West; Mr. Yaroslav Stetsko has been its President for decades.

ACT OF JUNE 30, 1941, (The) — an act whereby a National Assembly in Lviv called at the initiative of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists led by Stepan Bandera proclaimed on the date the re-establishment of Ukraine's independence and set up Government headed by Mr. Yaroslav Stetsko. He and his colleagues were soon afterwards arrested by the Nazis occupying Ukraine at the time.

A.K. (Armija Krajowa) — Polish Home Army loyal to the Polish Government in London; opposed to the Germans and later to the Russians who collaborated with the former in inflicting on A.K. a mortal blow during the Warsaw uprising.

BANDERA, Stepan — born 1909; outstanding Ukrainian patriot, leader of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists for many years; the death sentence passed on him by the Polish regime in 1936 was later substituted by life imprisonment; spent the World War II in German captivity, during which time the Ukrainian national liberation struggle continued under his banner. For 13 post-war years he escaped one Russian communist plot after another to capture or kill him. Finally, in 1959 in Munich he was assassinated with the help of a poison pistol by an agent sent out by command of the CC of the CPSU and Soviet Government.

BANDERIVTSI (Banderites) — followers of Stepan Bandera (see above) and the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists-Revolutionaries.

BILAS, Vasyl — member of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists; executed by the Poles in 1932.

B.Kh. — (Polish: "Batalion Chlopski"). Communist-organized Peasants' Battalions.

BOGOLYUBSKIY, Andrey — the 12th century prince of Suzdal (Muscovy) who sacked Kyiv (Kiev) and other Ukrainian places and his name became synonymous with cruelty and barbarism.

BUKOVYNA — (Bukovina), a region of Ukraine bordering on Rumania.

CHUPRYNKA, Roman — pseudonym of Roman Shukhevych, outstanding Ukrainian patriot, organizer and leader of the Ukrainian national liberation movement during and after the second World War; Chairman of the Ukrainian Supreme Liberation Council (UHVR) and Commander-in-Chief of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army; fell in a battle with the Russian Communist troops in March, 1950.

DANYLYSHYN, Dmytro — member of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists; executed by the Poles in 1932.

DONTSOV, Dmytro (Dr.) — an outstanding Ukrainian patriot, political writer and commentator of centuries-old ideas of the Ukrainian Nationalism. Died in Montreal, Canada, in 1973.

'HAHILKY' — traditional Ukrainian Easter season games with singing and dancing, with variations peculiar to different regions of Ukraine.

HALYCHYNA (Galicia) — the name of one of the western regions of Ukraine bordering on Poland.

"KAVKAZ" ("The Caucasus") — a very famous political poem by Taras Shevchenko, the bard of Ukraine.

"KHYRYSTOS VOSKRES" — a customary Ukrainian Easter-season greeting which means Christ is Risen.

"KOLOMYYYKA" — a brief humorous or satirical song, usually followed one after another in rapid succession, peculiar to Hutsulshchyna, a region of Ukraine bordering on Hungary and Rumania. Also a dance.

KONOVALETS', Yevhen — an outstanding Ukrainian patriot, military and political leader, one of the founders of the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists. Assassinated by a Soviet agent in Rotterdam in 1938.

KOVPAK, Sidor — leader of one of the Russian partisan units which operated against the Ukrainian Insurgent Army behind the German lines in the last war.

KRUTY — an important railway junction north-east of Kyiv, famous for the battle, on 29th January, 1918, between a handful of troops of the young Ukrainian Republic and hordes of Russian Bolsheviks.

LEMKIVSHCHYNA (Lemky Region) — a region of Ukraine bordering on Poland.

MAZEPA CAP — headgear of some units of the UPA reminiscent of the headgear of the famous Ukrainian Cossack leader, Ivan Mazepa.

MIKHNOVSKYY, Mykola — lawyer and politician, one of the leaders of the Ukrainian national revival before and during the first World War.

NKVD — the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs, one of the names for the Soviet internal security organization responsible for the death of millions of people.

OUN — the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists, first formed in 1929 of several organizations dedicated to the struggle for the liberation and independence of Ukraine.

PETLYURA, Symon — an outstanding Ukrainian patriot who has traversed the road of journalist in the Tsarist Russian period to Head of Government and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Ukrainian National Republic. Because of his uncompromising stand against the Russian Bolsheviks, they assassinated him on 25th May, 1926, in Paris.

POLISSYA — a region of Ukraine bordering on Byelorussia.

SHEVCHENKO, Taras — born a serf in Ukraine under Russian domination in 1814, he became the most famous poet and thinker in Ukraine. His writings have inspired generation after generation of Ukrainians to the greatest efforts for the good of their native land and mankind, as a whole. Shevchenko died at the early age of 47, as the result of the life-long sufferings and persecution on the part of the then oppressors of Ukrainian liberty.

SHUKHEVYCH, Roman — (please see Chuprynka, Roman above).

SKV — Ukrainian: Samooboronni kushchovi viddily. The self-defence group detachments.

SOLOVKY — The Solovky island in the White Sea; one of many places of imprisonment of political dissidents both during the Russian Tsarist and Communist regimes; only God knows how many innocent people have been executed or starved to death in that cursed place.

• STAKHANOV — a Russian coal miner and Stalin's protege, whose name became one of the most hated by honest workers in the USSR. With help from authorities and by deceit he achieved an unusually high coal output per shift and was proclaimed an example to be emulated by all industrial workers in the USSR for decades.

STETSKO, Yaroslav — an outstanding Ukrainian patriot, leading member of the Ukrainian liberation movement; Head of last Ukrainian national Government (see "Act of June 30, 1941" above), present-time Leader of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists; President of the Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations (see "ABN" above); Co-Chairman of the European Freedom Council.

UHVR — (Ukrainian: Ukrayinska Holovna Vyzvolna Rada), the Ukrainian Supreme Liberation Council, founded, at the initiative of the OUN-revolutionaries, in Ukraine during her struggle against the Russian Communist and German Nazi invaders during the last war.

UKRAINIAN INSURGENT ARMY (UPA), (The) — the main armed force of Ukraine during and after the last World War. The pride and glory of all Ukrainian patriots. Led by Roman Shukhevych-Chuprynka (see above), its strength lay in universal popular support and righteousness of its aim: — free independent indivisible Ukraine.

UVO — (Ukrainian: Ukrayinska Viyskova Orhanizatsiya), the Ukrainian Military Organization, formed after the brutal destruction of the young Ukrainian National Republic by the Russian Communist hordes in the early '20s. Its aim was to continue armed struggle for Ukraine's freedom. In 1929 the UVO became a component part of the UNO, a political and para-military force of the Ukrainian people.

"VICHNAYA PAMYAT" — "Eternal remembrance," one of the chants in traditional Ukrainian religious requiem services.

VOLYN; VOLYNIYA — a region of Ukraine.

VYNNYCHENKO, Volodymyr — Ukrainian writer; one-time member of the Supreme Directory of the newly re-established Ukrainian National Republic after the Russian revolution; lost the popular support because of his extreme Left-wing views; died in exile in France.

ZAKERZONNYA — The land beyond the Curzon Line which was drawn by the Lord Curzon Commission between the Ukrainians and Poles.

ZASYANNYA — The land beyond the River Syan.
